

*Ann* O F *Johannis Cotton*  
*Mather*  
**Scandal:**

Together with  
A Consideration of the Nature  
O F  
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY  
A N D  
**Things Indifferent.**

*Wherein these weighty Questions are fully Discussed:*

1. Whether Things indifferent become necessary, when commanded by Authority? *Neg.*
2. Whether Scandalous things, being enjoyed, may lawfully be done? *Neg.*
3. Whether a Restraint laid upon things indifferent, without a reasonable Ground, be not an infringement of Christian Liberty? *Aff.*
4. Who is to be judg, whether there be a reasonable Ground or no, in such cases?
5. How far forth we are bound in Conscience to obey Humane Laws.

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and *Bible* in the *Poultrey* over against  
the Church, 1 6 8 3.







# TO THE READER.

**T**Here are but one or two things  
(by way of Preface) that I  
shall trouble the Reader withal,  
in his passage to the ensuing  
Discourse; and they relate partly to the  
Pedigree, and partly to the Age of this  
exposed Birth. When as the Ceremonies,  
(those Dregs of Romish Superstition, and  
Troublers of our Nation) which for di-  
vers years together seemed to be dead (and  
were taken by many to be deadly) began  
to be revived again, and pressed with more  
eagerness and fierceness than ever; so  
that now there was no room left for Cam-  
position, but every Minister must either  
pay the whole (I cannot say, Debt, but)  
demanded Conformity, even to the least  
mice, and last farthing, or become Bank-  
rupt;

rupt ; it highly behoved every one to cast up his accounts, and consider with himself, whether he were solvendo par, and could with a good conscience defray the great and extraordinary charges of such an intire Compliance, as was required ; or whether he must not be constrained (in such a storm) to throw over-board, not only  $\pi$  ουσιν, his tackling, ( Acts 27. 19 ) but also to part with,  $\theta$ λον  $\pi$  βιον αὐτοῦ, ( Mark 12. 44. ) all his living, to redeem and secure the life of his soul and conscience. On the one hand, the Avengers of the blood of their Diana-Ceremonies, pursued the scent so hotly, that there was no possibility of escaping for any one who did not take sanctuary at their Altars : The storm was so impetuous and outrageous, as threatned inevitable ruine ( as to all outward concerns ) to every one who did not shelter himself under the Alt of Uniformity, and swim along with the stream that way that the Wind and Tide carried him. On the other hand, there seemed to be such Gulfs, and Shelves, and Rocks, as threatned evident shipwrack of a good conscience, or endanger'd drowning in the passage and practice of what was enjoyed : So that it was the great

concernment of every one that would look to the end of his Voyage, that is, beyond these temporal things, to those that are eternal, and would secure his interest in another world, to look about him, and to take care that he did not condemn himself (in his judgment) in that thing which he allowed (in his practice), but to be fully perswaded and satisfied in his own mind, that so he might not act doubtingly, but in faith, as is required, Rom. 14. 22, 23. This posture of affairs put me upon an impartial Examination and Consideration of what was alledged on both sides; and finding that the resolution of the case in general (besides the consideration of particulars) depended chiefly upon these Points handled in the following Discourse (for if the command of Authority does not alter the nature of things, and render that necessary, which before was but indifferent, then (according to their own principles) the Law of Scandal takes hold of me, and I am bound not to do that, at which another is offended. And again, If that which is commanded remain still indifferent, then I am bound also to assert my Christian Liberty, and not tamely to give it up (Isa-

char-like) and so make my self a servant, yea a slave of men, by my own consent and voluntary act;) Thereupon I enter'd upon a more narrow search of these Principles, (as I may call them), and upon the whole, I came to that result and issue in my thoughts, which I have Transcribed into these Papers.

Concerning the point of Scandal, though many have travel'd in the same way before me; yet they have left such hedges and ditches behind them, that would put a man either to a stand, that he can go no further, or to a leap, or to a turn, to get over, or pass by them. These I have endeavour'd to level (for I am a great friend to such levelling) and to make every thing as smooth and plain as possibly I could; and likewise to lay down such general Rules, as may lead us to a determination of such other cases of the same nature as may occur. These things were then scribled (and some of them delivered in a publick Auditory, before that fatal blow was given, Aug. 24. 62.) and have lain in obscurity ever since; and whether they are happily or unhappily now brought forth, and exposed to publick view, the event must determine.

I have

*I have but one word more, and that's a word of Request (and I think a very reasonable one ) viz. That the Reader will be so charitable, as to believe that it { was purely the powerfully convincing evidence of Truth shining in my eyes, that inclined me (like a strong Bias) to run counter to my own interest. And surely he must be highly uncharitable, that can imagine that any one person (much less a considerable number of persons of unexceptionable Morals, and in all other respects serious and sober ) should be so desperately bent upon his own undoing, as to shut his eyes against the light, and refuse to admit of truths of such comfortable importance as these, tending to Conformity, are of. Vale.*

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OF  
SCANDAL:

Together with  
A Consideration of the Nature of *Christian Liberty*,  
and *Things Indifferent*, &c.

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I Cor. X. 32.

*Give none offence, neither to the  
Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to  
the Church of God.*

**T**HE Apostle *Paul*, being consulted by the *Corinthians*, among other things, concerning the lawfulness of eating meat offer'd in sacrifice to Idols, first *states the case*, by distinguishing of those *Idolbytes*, and accordingly passes a different *Verdict* and Sentence upon them. *Some were eaten*

eaten in the Idol's Temple, some elsewhere. Some  
*Cudworth's* were eaten in the Idol's Temple (chap. 8. v. 10.)  
 True No- in the nature of a feast upon, or after, a sacrifice:  
 tion, &c. A thing very usual among the Heathen, as *A-*  
*In Exposit.* *bravanel* has observ'd בִּימֵי הַקִּדְמוֹת וְכֹה  
*Legis.* In old time, saith he, whosoever sacrificed to  
 Idols, presently made a feast of the sacrifices.  
 Hence that Invitation of one in *Virgil's*  
*Eclogues* to his friend,

*Cum faciam vitulâ pro frugibus, ipse venito.*  
 And this was so usual, that *Plutarch* some-  
 where remarks it for a strange and uncouth  
*rite* in the worship of the Goddess *Hecate*,  
 that they which offer'd sacrifice to her, did  
 not partake thereof. Now this practice of  
 eating thus of *Idolothytes* in the Idols Temple,  
 and at the Idols Table, the Apostle absolutely  
 condemns, as being a *Communion with Devils*,  
 and a partaking with them in their Idolatry, v. 20,  
 22. To eat them thus, was to eat them under  
 the very notion and formality of an Idol-sacri-  
 fice, and so was a plain honouring of the  
 Idol, and might easily be interpreted an ac-  
 knowledgment of their Deity, and an approba-  
 tion of that Idolatrous worship and service  
 which was given them. But then, when  
 they had done feasting in the Temple, if any  
 thing were left (as there was a great deal  
 sometimes) they were wont to carry part of  
 it home to their houses, and make merry with  
 it there, as the Learned *Scholiast* upon *Ari-*  
*stoph.* in *Plutus* tells us, *Οἱ γὰρ ἐκ θυσιῶν*  
*ἰδίῃς ἐσθραύουσιν αὐτῆς τῆς θυσιᾶς τοῖς ἰδιώταις,*  
*κατὰ*



κατὰ νόμον τινά. They that went from a sacrifice, carried something of it to their friends, according to a certain Law, viz that Law mentioned by Petite, in his Collection of Attick Laws, That they that go home from a sacrifice, should carry part of it to their friends. Hence that of Theocritus in Bucolicis,

— καὶ τὸ δὲ θύσας (πέμψον.

Ταῖς σύμφαις, Μόρσωνι καλὸν κρέας αὐτίκα  
 And then after all this, that which remained, belonged to the Priests. Νόμος ἦ, τὰ ὑπολειπόμενα τῆς θυσίας, τὰς ἱεράς λαμβάνειν, Schol. Aristoph. in Vesp. There was a law, that the Priests should have the Reliques of the sacrifice; which Reliques (as August. in his Exposit. on Rom. 2. tells us) were sometimes sold for them in the Market. Now both these sorts, viz. which either they were invited to at the Tables of their unbelieving neighbours, or had bought in the Market for their own private use, the Apostle allows them to eat of, extra casum scandali, because the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof, v. 26. i. e. their property could not be altered by that offering, but that still they remained the good creatures of God made for our use, and which he has given us (in Christ) freely to enjoy; and to eat them thus, was not to eat them under any Religious notion or capacity, but only as meat; matter of food. and the good creatures of God. But in case any were offended therewith, then they must forbear, v. 28. and that for another reason, though express in the same

same words, *The earth is the Lords, &c.* i.e. There are other good creatures enow, which may as well be had, that we may make use of, without such offence. So that the *Sum* of the Apostles answer is, *A caution against two extremes* (as *P. Martyr* observes). One of those, who, upon the account of their knowledge, that *an Idol was nothing* (chap. 8. v. 4.) would eat of these Sacrifices, even in the Idol's Temple. The other, of weak ones, who, for fear they should chance to eat of such meat, would forbear all kind of flesh-meat, and feed only upon *herbs*, *Rom.* 14. 2. The former he cautions against *eating*, and would have them *forbear*; the latter, against *forbearing*, and would have them *eat*. And then hereupon he shuts up his discourse with two general Rules, whereby all the actions of our lives must be regulated, *viz.* *The Rule of Piety*, and the *Rule of Charity*. The *Rule of Piety*, which is, That we should aim at the glory of God in all, *v.* 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* And the *Rule of Charity*, which is, That we should have respect to the good of our brethren, and of all in general; in the Text, *Give none offence, &c.* which he illustrates by his own example, *v.* 33. *Even as I please all men in all things; not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* 'Tis the *Rule of Charity*, that I have made choice of for present Consideration, *Give none offence, &c.*

Which

Which words divide themselves into a general caution, and the universal extent thereof. The Caution in the former words, Give none offence.] viz. In the use of such indifferent things, as he had been speaking of before. q. d. Though it be not unlawful in it self, to eat any kind of meat that offers it self to your use, either at your neighbours table, or in the shambles; yet in case any take offence thereat, then you must govern your selves accordingly, and forbear it in that case. The words in the Original are, Ἀπόστολοι γίνεσθε, Be ye inoffensive, or, without offence: The Ethiopick renders it, Be ye exemplary, (far enough from the words, though not so far from the sense; for Tertull. defines Scandalum, by Exemplum.) The word ἀπόστολοι comes originally from κόπω, which signifies primarily, and in general, to beat; and thence is, προσκόπω, rendred, to dash against, Mat. 4. 6.—Lest at any time thou dash thy foot (προσκόψῃς) against a stone, to beat upon, c. 7. v. 27. the winds beat upon (προσέκοιτο) that bouse. To stumble (which is, when a man dashes, or beats, or hits his foot against any thing) John 11. 9. he stumbles not (ὁ προσκόψεται). So Rom. 9. 32. 33. and 'tis ranked with, συναδελφίζεται ἡ ἀδελφία, Rom. 14. 21. which shews that 'tis translated from a literal and natural, to a Metaphorical and Moral sense: so the Noun προσκομμα signifies any thing in the way against which a man may stumble and

and dash his foot ; rendred therefore a *stumbling-block*, 1 Cor. 8. 9. and Rom. 14. 13. and barely *stumbling*, Rom. 9. 32. *they stumbled against the stumbling-stone*, or *stone of stumbling*, λίθον προσκυματός, and *offence*, Rom. 14. 20. *It is evil for that man that eateth with offence* : And so the other Noun προσκοπή, is rendred, *offence*. Also 2 Cor. 6. 3. *Give none offence*. And from hence, immediately is derived the word of the Text, ἀνεῖσινος, which is *verbum ambiguum*, saith *Erasm.* And indeed, being absolutely consider'd, it may seem ἐπαυτοεξέζω, equally to incline to an *active* and *passive* signification, and to admit of the construction both of *giving* and *taking* offence. It is used only in three places. In one of them, *Beza* understands it *passively*, Phil 1. 10. *without offence* (ἀνεῖσινος) *till the day of the Lord*, *Inoffenso cursu pergatis*, saith he, i. e. walk so warily, as not to stumble at any stumbling-stone you may meet with in your way, i. e. not to be offended, or take offence. In another, it is undoubtedly taken *actively*, Acts 24. 16. *I exercise my self to have a conscience void of offence* (ἀνεῖσινος συνείδησις) *toward God, and toward men*, i. e. not to offend, either in sight of God or men ; not to give offence to God or men ; not to do any thing for which my conscience may check me as an offender either against God or men ; or, for which, either God or men may call me to account as a transgressor.

Then

Then for the Text (the only place else, where the word is used). *A lapide* takes in both senses, *Tam inoffensus, quam non offendens*, neither giving, nor taking offence to or from others; but the *active* sense seems to me the most natural and unconstrained, and most agreeable to the following words; and so our Translators took it, rendring it, *Give none offence*. Thus Theodoret expressly, *A vobis nulla oriatur causa scandali*. And so 'tis exactly parallel'd with that other place, 2 Cor. 6. 3. where it is exprest plainly, *Μηδὲν εἰς μὴδὲν δαδόντες ὀνειδισμὸν*, Giving no offence in any thing.

Thus for the Caution. The Extent thereof follows in the latter clause,

— Neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.] Where, by Jews and Gentiles, are meant such as are unconverted strangers and enemies to the faith of Christ, distinguish't therefore from the church of God; So that under these three ranks the Apostle understands all sorts of men in the world, who were either Jews, or Gentiles, or Christians; none of which must be offended by us, in the use of our liberty in things indifferent; so the Dutch Annot. and so P. Martyr, *Omnes status & omnia hominum genera voluit à nobis respici ne scandalizentur, vel ab Evangelio evertantur, seu in ejus cursu quoquomodo retardentur*. And Chrysost. to the same purpose, *Οὐ μὴδεν δὲ ἀδελφὸς ἢ χρὶς πλάττει*,  
 709,

ἴσμεν, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς δυνάτοῖς ἔσθ' ὅτι ἐξωθεν.  
*We must not only not smite (i. e. offend) our Brethren, but also not those that are without.*

Thus I think I have made the way clear and plain before the face of the *Doctrine*, which is this.

**Doctr.** *We must forbear the use of our liberty in things indifferent, when others are offended and scandalized thereat. Or, nearer to the words of the Text, thus: We ought not to give offence, by the use of Indifferences, to any persons whatsoever. Even, as Nurses many times forbear several meats, though wholesome in themselves, and suitable to their own stomachs, for their Nurselings sakes, because they find them not agreeing with their constitutions, but hurtful and prejudicial to them: And, as that man should do very ill, who, though he could sit his horse, and run him full-speed without danger to himself, yet should come scouring through a Town, where many Children are in the way, who, before he's aware, may be rid over by him, and spoiled; so there are many things lawful in themselves, and which, as to our own particulars, we might safely and warrantably do, which yet we must forbear for others sakes, when their stomachs will not bear them; when there are weak Christians in the way, which may be rid over by us, and wounded thereby. This duty of inoffensive walking, in such cases, is often inculcated*



culcated upon us, *Rom. 14. 13.* ---but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brothers way, *πρόσνομα, ἢ σκandalon.* The Apostle here makes use of both the *synonymous* words for *Scandal*, to enlarge and strengthen the prohibition: And this is spoken upon occasion of *indifferent* things (as the Context, both precedent and subsequent clearly shows) *viz.* of meats and drinks *Leviticall*ly unclean, but which now under the Gospel might indifferently be used as well as any other; and likewise of *Jewish* Fasts and Festivals, the observation whereof was a while permitted and *indifferent*, *viz.* till the Interrment of the Ceremonial Law in the ruins and rubbish of the Temple. So that it is, as if he had said, Let persons forbear the use of meats and drinks forbidden to the *Jews* (though now lawful to Christians), and let them not be offended at their observation of their *Fasts* and *Festivals* (though now but a *ciser*, without any *signification*). Then, again, a little after he speaks very fully, *v. 21.* *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.* Here he proceeds to enlarge his Doctrine touching *Scandal*, beyond the controversie that occasion'd this his discourse. For (as *Estius* well observes) he teaches that to avoid the offence and scandal of our Brethren, we must abstain not only from things prohibited by the

Law, (though that Law was really now expired) but also from things not prohibited; from flesh, wine, or any indifferent thing whatever. It is good] not only accidentally, as (a) some would have it, but morally, and in it self, both in regard of God, being very acceptable and pleasing unto him; In regard of our Brethren, being profitable for them, and conducing to their Edification; and also in regard of our selves, being a duty God requires of us, in performance whereof we shall discharge our consciences, and have comfort. — Neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing (i. e. to make use of any indifferency whatever) whereby thy Brother stum-

(b) Infirmitas nominat promptitudinem ad Scandalum; offensio autem nominat indignationem — scandalum autem importat ipsam impactionem ad ruinam. Aq. 222. q. 43. a. 1. *Infirmitas nominat promptitudinem ad Scandalum; offensio autem nominat indignationem — scandalum autem importat ipsam impactionem ad ruinam. Aq. 222. q. 43. a. 1.* *Three words importing for substance one and the same thing (though (b) some have endeavoured to distinguish them) not without an observable Emphasis; for hereby he insinuates the great heed, care and circumspection Christians should take, lest any ways by the use of things indifferent, they should be an occasion of offence to a weak Brother. So again in the very next Chapter, Rom. 15. 1. We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. i. e. Though a thing be not only lawful in it self, but that wherein we take much pleasure and content in doing of it; yet if there be any weak stomach by, which perhaps cannot*



cannot away with such a dish; we must deny our selves therein, and abridg our selves of our liberty, for their sakes. And the like care he presses upon the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 8. 8. *Take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours, become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.* i. e. Though in some cases you may lawfully eat of things offer'd to Idols, yet you must be sure you do not do it, to the offence of any. And as in these places we have the *Rule* sufficiently confirmed, so elsewhere we may find *Examples* hereof in Practice. The Example of Christ offers it self first to consideration, who wrought a miracle for the avoiding of offence, *Mat. 17. 24--27. Nevertheless, lest we should offend them, go thou to the Sea, &c. q. d. Though (as thou sayest) I am not bound to pay this Tax, but might make use of my liberty herein, and refuse; yet lest we should give them occasion to think or speak evil of us, as contemners of the Law and Temple of God (for whose use this was paid; as Hilary and Ambrose among the Ancients; Brugensis, Canero, and others of the Modern, conceive;)* Or, as if we did teach and encourage Subjects to rebel against their Governours (as *Beza* glosses it), therefore I'll wave the use of my liberty, and do that which thou sayest I am not bound to. We have the example of *Paul* also, who having given this charge both to the *Romans* and *Corinthians* (as we

have seen); does not, Pharisee-like, lay a burden upon other mens shoulders, and put a yoke upon their necks, which himself was not willing to touch or bear, but declares, both his *Resolution* in this case, 1 Cor. 8. 13. *Wherefore if meat make my Brother to offend. I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my Brother to offend.* Mark, he does not only say, I'll not give my Brother any just occasion of offence, but, I'll not do that (if I may as lawfully leave it undone) whereupon he may take occasion of offence; nor only, I'll not eat of things offer'd to Idols, but, I'll eat no flesh; nor only, I'll forbear for a little while, or for some certain time, but, I'll never eat thereof while the world stands; nor only, I'll forbear in case of his damnation, but in case of his offence; if it make him to offend. *Conclusio Apostolico pectore dignissima*, saith *Iustinian*. A truly noble and imitable *Resolution*, which (though as to the amplification in some particulars should be hyperbolic, as *Calvin* and *P. Martyr* think, yet in the general) does most convincingly hold forth, that Christians should rather abridge themselves in the use of their *Christian Liberty*, than be an occasion of scandalizing any. And as here he declares his *Resolution*, so in the next verse to the Text, his *Practice*. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved. i. e.* Not in respect of any points of

of Faith, but in the use of my Christian Liberty, I do so accommodate my self to all, either by doing, or forbearing, as may be most acceptable to them, gaining upon them, and profitable for their souls. See also 1 Cor. 9. 19--22. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made my self a servant unto all, &c.) Which general may be verified by many particulars, as, his Purifying of himself, (Act. 21. 24, 26.) his forbearing his power to take wages of the Corinthians, and some other Churches, (1 Cor. 9. 18. 1 Thess. 2. 6. and 2 Ep. 3. 9.) his Circumcising of Timothy for the Jews sake (Act. 16. 3.) his not suffering Titus to be circumcised for the Gentiles sake, (Gal. 2. 3, 4, 5. That the truth of the Gospel might continue with you). And this was the practice of the other Apostles also with him, 2 Cor. 6. 3. Giving (or, we giving) none offence in any thing. *Μὴ δυνάμεθα ἐς μηδὲν ἑαυτοὺς κωλύειν.* Which words, though some (as Anselme, and the Syriack Interpreter) understand as a Rule and Direction to the Corinthians, yet generally, and more suitably to the Context, they are look't upon, as Paul's Speech of himself, and some others with him, that they did so behave themselves, as none might take offence at them. *Ita in omnibus vitam meam ac conversationem dirigo, ut, non dico accusationis, sed nec indignationis locum, cuiquam tribuam,* saith Euthymius.

Thus

Thus much may serve for the present support of the point, to keep it from sinking (in your thoughts) while we open the three principal spurs or roots of it, by taking a survey of the Nature (1) of Christian Liberty; as to this particular; (2) Of Things Indifferent; (3) Of Scandal; all rugged, thorny, and disputable points, for each of them has some *incumbrance* upon it; some considerable difficulty attending it, which will render our passage thorow them the more operose and troublesome. But we shall endeavour briefly to remove the several difficulties that occur, and make the way as plain and smooth as possibly we can, that even a *child* may both *run* and *read*; and that by a narrow Consideration and strict Examination of these three things (as I said).

1. What our *Liberty* is in things indifferent, which we must not make use of to the scandal and offence of others.

2. What the nature of these *Indifferencies* are wherein we have this liberty.

3. What the nature of that *Scandal* is, for which we must forbear the use of our liberty in these Indifferenties.

I.

And first for the first, what our *Liberty* is in things indifferent. This Liberty, as it is a freedom from the Mosaical Pedagogy and Ceremonies, is one branch of *Christian Liberty*. Now that we may the better understand

stand the nature of *Liberty as Christian*, i. e. belonging to us as Christians, in opposition to, and contradistinction from the *Jews*, we shall a little reflect upon *Jewish bondage* to see what that was; for, as they say, *Contraries are the best Commentaries*, and their mutual opposition, the most effectual exposition. Of *Jewish bondage*, these were two principal branches.

1. A numerous train of external Rites and Ceremonious observances, which lay like a mask or folded vail upon the fair face of spiritual worship, so that they could scarce see wood for trees, discern the inward beauty thereof; or were like the pictures in a book, which children look mostly at, not regarding the sense. Now this was a burden and yoke, which galled their necks, and almost broke their backs, so that they were not able to *Act. 15. 10.* bear it.

2. The restraint that lay upon them in reference to certain meats, days, and other things in their own nature indifferent; concerning which it was said unto them, *Touch not, taste not, handle not, &c.* whereby their hands were tied, and their mouths gag'd, and a knife set to their throats; and so their liberty was restrain'd, and they were brought into bondage and thralldom thereby. Now *Christian Liberty* snaps asunder the bonds of both these Impositions; For,

1. It has discharged the Ceremonies from

any further attendance upon the worship of God, and admitted only a few plainer (in the two Sacraments of *Baptism* and the *Lords Supper*) into their rooms; so that true Gospel-worshippers do *worship God in spirit and in truth*, eminently over what they did then.

Joh. 4.23.

2. That Ceremonial restraint is also now taken off, which lay upon the use of indifferent things (which is the particular under present consideration) which to us Christians God has *cleansed* (*Act. 10. 15.*) and made *pure*, (*Tit. 1. 15.*) and given us *freely to enjoy*, (*1 Tim. 6. 17.*) and therefore *nothing is now to be refused*, (*viz. upon any such account*), (*1 Tim. 4. 4.*) And this *Liberty* we are bound strenuously to assert and stand fast in, not suffering our selves to be again intangled with this yoke, (*Gal. 5. 1.*) nor subjecting our selves to any humane *Ordinances*, either by way of *Doctrine* or *Command*, not to *touch, taste, handle, &c.* (*Col. 2. 20—22.*) whereby any tye should lye upon us for a total and universal abstinence from any of the good creatures of God.

So then, *Christian Liberty* allows a free use of things indifferent.

But now, notwithstanding this general permission, there may be a *particular, occasional, and accidental restraint* of this liberty, *pro hic & nunc*, upon several occasions, and in several cases: As,

(1) In case of *Scandal to our selves*, if we find



find them squares, and occasions of sin to us, *Mat. 5. 29. If thy right eye offend thee, &c. Prov. 23. 1. Put a knife to thy throat, &c. So in case of Drunkenness, Prov. 23. 31. Look not upon the wine when it is red, &c.*

(2) In case of *Scandal to others*, when it gives offence to them, and wounds their conscience, *Gal. 5. 13. Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. i.e. So use your liberty, as may be consistent with Charity. (But of this more hereafter).*

(3) In case of a *Vow, or Oath, or such like Engagement*, *Deut. 23. 23. That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform. Wherein yet Christians should be very careful that they don't unnecessarily intangle themselves.*

(4) In case of *Competition, or Interfering with any necessary duty*. It was free for the *Jews* to offer what they pleased for the service of the Temple; but if their parents stood in need of it (their relief being a necessary duty) it was a frustrating God's Command, to use their liberty in that case, *Mat. 15. 4--6.*

(5) In case of *Scruple or Prejudice*, when Conscience either condemns, *Rom. 14. 14.--To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean; or doubts of the lawfulness of such a practice, Rom. 14. 23.--Whatsoever is not of faith (i.e. of a persuasion that it is either*

either prescribed, or permitted by God, and so lawful to be done) is sin.

(6) In case of a just Prohibition by Authority, 1 King. 2. 36. *And the King said unto Shimei, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.* Jer. 35. 6. *But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever. Which practice of theirs was not only allowed, but rewarded by God, as may be seen, v. 18, 19.*

Now here lies the difficulty in this point of Christian Liberty in indifferent things.

*Dub.*

Whether a restraint laid upon an indifferent thing meerly by humane authority, be an infringement of, and encroachment upon, Christian Liberty?

This is a hard knot, which generally all that I have met with, have (in my apprehension) rather cut asunder, than untied.

Some will have Christian Liberty herein, to consist both in Liberty of judgement and practice; and that, *If what Christ has left free do not still remain as free as Christ left it, and we yield to it, and comply accordingly; this is not to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.* So the Author of *Beams of former Light*, p. 69, 70. The common Doctrine is, That Determination of the Practice, does not prejudice Christian Liberty. Thus P.  
Martyr



*Martyr in Cor. De adiaphoribus, libertas in animo retinenda est, non in actione.* And so Dr. Sanderson. The liberty of a Christian to any thing indifferent consists in this, That his judgement is thoroughly perswaded of the indifferency of it; and therefore it is the Determination of the judgement in the opinion of the thing, not in the use of it, that takes away Christian Liberty. So others. But I must needs profess my unsatisfiedness with this distinction, as not being, to my apprehension, sufficiently countenanc'd by Scripture, but rather disown'd; and for other reasons also which follow afterwards.

Serm. p.  
589. 410.  
and so, *De*  
*Consc.* p.  
211, &c.

If I may have leave to try my skill for the untying of this knot, I shall offer my thoughts, and make payment of what is due to this question (at least, my *shot* and *share* of it) in these several Sums following.

*Sol.*

Prop. 1. 'Tis certain, that Civil Subjection, and Obedience to Magistrates, and Christian Liberty do very well consist together. There's a friendly correspondence between them, without any jarring or discord. There are places of Scripture which plainly enjoyn the practice of both these. On the one hand, Civil Subjection, Rom. 13. 1. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* On the other hand, standing to our Christian Liberty, Gal. 5. 1. *Stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.* Nay, there's one place seems to joyn and marry

marry them both together, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your selves to every ordinance of man* (i. e. to all sorts of Magistrates; so called, because they are of mens setting up, are for mens good; and the particular form usually left to mens choice and determination) *for the Lords sake.* And lest any should object, That this were to prejudice our *Christian Liberty*; he adds, v. 16. *As free*, which both *Chrys.* and *Oecumenius* joyn with the word *submit*, v. 13. as if he had said, We may sub-

(a) *Bonus, etiamsi serviat, liber est: malus autem etiamsi regnet, servus est; nec unius hominis, sed, quod gravius est, tot Dominorum, quot vitiorum.* Aug. de C. D. l. 4. c. 3.

mit our selves, and yet be free too; we may be (a) obedient Subjects, and yet free Christians. Submission to every Ordinance of man, and Christian freedom are not inconsistent.

Prop. 2. *Christian Liberty* lies originally in the judgement: In accounting and judging those things about which it is conversant, or wherein it does consist, to be neither commanded nor forbidden by God. The reason whereof is, Because the *Practice* depends altogether upon this; so that if the judgement be once leaven'd with erroneous principles concerning these things, then the *Practice* is for ever restrain'd, and so the whole being of *Christian Liberty* quite lost and destroy'd. Whereas, when the judgement is rightly informed, though in some cases *Li-*  
*berry*

*Liberty of Practice* may be restrain'd, yet in all others it remains entire. And therefore, though in several cases we may part with *Liberty of Practice* (as has been shew'd), yet we must be sure to preserve *Liberty of Judgement* entire, and stand fast in that. Which, I conceive, was one main reason (and not, because *Christian Liberty* did consist only therein, as \* a very learned Writer supposes) \* *Stillingsf. Iren. p. 58.* that *Paul* was so zealous in asserting and contending for *Liberty of Judgement*, and opposing those who went about to impose a *Doctrinal* necessity of observing Judaical Rites and Ceremonies, *Gal. 2. 4, 5*. Whereas in matter of *Practice* he does occasionally yield in that, out of tenderness towards weak Brethren, and compliance with them for their good. Yet,

Prop. 3. *Christian Liberty is not confin'd only to the Judgement*: It does not consist only in *Liberty of Judgement*; so that if that be left free, the *Practice* may be totally and universally restrain'd, without any possibility of a breach of *Liberty* thereby. But, *Christian Liberty* extends to the *Practice* also; so that *Liberty of Practice* is a branch of *Christian Liberty*, as well as *Liberty of Judgement*. You shall find the Apostle *Paul* condemns the restraint of the *Practice*, as being a violation of their liberty, and a returning again into bondage, *Gal. 4. 9, 10*. *Ye observe days, and*

and months, &c. Col. 2. 20, 21. *Why are ye subject to Ordinances? Touch not, &c. i. e. Why do you dance after their pipe, tune your Fingers to their Tongues, and conform your Practice to their Precepts and Doctrines? You ought not to do so: It's a renouncing of your interest in Christ's Death. Besides, Do you think a Magistrate might now forbid his Subjects the use of all those things which God made unclean by the Ceremonial Law, though he left their Judgements free? or command the use of all those Rites then established, though not upon a sacred, but a civil account?*

Prop. 4. *The meer determination of the Practice, quatenus determination, doth not infringe our Liberty; for then it might not justly be determin'd in any case whatsoever; but it may justly be determin'd in some cases without breach of liberty, viz. in the cases before mentioned. The reason whereof is, Because those things in such a case, put off (pro hic & nunc) the nature of indifferency, and become necessary, and so lye without the verge and bounds of Liberty. But,*

Prop. 5. *A needless and unnecessary deprivation of this Liberty of Practice, is the direct and formal breach of it. Not meerly the Determination, as was said, but the needlessness of it, i. e. when there is no reason at all for it,*

it, but meerly the Determiners will. My reason is, Because it is an *unjust* restraint of our liberty (as being made without reason, which is the rule and foundation of Justice), and therefore, a breach of our liberty.

There's a *twofold* goodness or necessity, *Intrinsic*, or *general*, engraven in the nature of things by some divine Command, natural or positive; as to pray, read, be diligent in our callings, &c. and *Extrinsic*, *Circumstantial*, or *Particular*, arising only from circumstances; as, to take Physick when I am sick, to recreate my self when I am tired out and wearied with the Duties of my particular calling, to have a convenient place for the publick Assemblies of the Church, &c. Now every lawful humane constitution must have one of these to vouch and warrant it. It must be grounded either upon the *Intrinsic* goodness of the thing; and therefore that is a lawful Constitution which enjoyns persons to assemble themselves together on the Lord's day for the publick and solemn worship of God. Or upon some *Extrinsic* and *Circumstantial* goodness; and therefore that is a lawful Statute, which prohibits the Exportation of Wool, because it would deprive the Natives of a great part of their maintenance about dressing and ordering of it; and that is a good Law which provides for the conveniency of place, &c. about publick worship.

ship. But otherwise, those Laws which have neither such an *intrinsic*, nor *circumstantial*

(a) We must distinguish between an indifferency as to its nature, and indifferency, as to its use and end; or, between an indifferency as to Law, and indifferency as to Order and Peace. Here I say, that in things wholly indifferent in both respects, that is, in a thing neither commanded nor forbidden by God, nor that has any apparent respect to the Peace and Order of the Church of God, there can be no rational account given, why the nature of such indifferencies should be alter'd by any humane Laws and Constitutions. But matters that are only indifferent as to a command, but are much conducing to the peace and order of a Church, are the proper matter of humane Constitutions concerning the Churches Polity. Stillingfl. Iren. p. 53. and the same may be said of civil affairs.

goodness, have not the due and (a) proper matter of a good Law. For every Law should be for the publick good; which such Laws cannot be, because they have nothing at all of goodness in them, and consequently do intrench upon *Christian Liberty*.

Now that this *circumstantial goodness* is necessarily required to warrant the determination of an indifferency, I prove thus:

Either the Magistrate must have regard to good and convenient circumstances in the lawful determination of things in their own nature indifferent; or a thing being so indifferent, he may cloath it with what circumstances he pleases. But he may not do so, which I prove by these instances: To dig a pit, is in general, and in its own nature an indifferent thing; but a Magistrate may not command  
me



me to dig it in an high-way, or in a street, or any great thorough-fare, because it might occasion the ruine of many; and so is not only inconvenient, but unlawful. Again, A Magistrate may lawfully command me to cover my fire, and rake it up in a safe place; but he may not command me to lay it among straw, or near Gunpowder; because this would be to the evident endangering of my house, and consequently unlawful. Therefore to make a lawful determination of an indifferency, so as thereby not to encroach on *Christian Liberty*; there must be a concurrence of circumstances constituting a *circumstantial goodness*, or necessity: without which, if the restraint depend meerly and solely upon the Law-makers will, it is a direct breach of Liberty, because (a) unjust.

Besides, for any person to stamp and imprint the character of a Law upon his own will in publick affairs, which concern the practice and obedience of others; and to say, *Sic volo, sic jubeo; I will have it so, because I will have it so*, looks too like a flower of the Imperial Crown of Heaven for any creature to wear in his bosom; and

(a) *Iniquam exercetis dominationem, si idem negatis licere quia vultis, non quia debuit non licere. Tertull. Apol. c. 4.*

*It were much more tolerable, if men would plead for the necessity of the things, which it seems good unto them to command, and on that ground to command their observance, than, granting them not necessary in themselves, to make them necessary to be observed*

meerly by vertue of their commands, for reasons, which, they say, satisfie themselves, but come short of giving satisfaction to them from whom obedience is required. For whereas the will of man can be no way influenced unto obedience, but by meer acknowledged Sovereignty, or conviction of reason in and from the things themselves, commands in and about things wherein they own not that the Commanders have an absolute Sovereignty (as God has in all things, and the Civil Supreme Magistrate, in things Civil, that are good and lawful), nor can they find the reasons of the things themselves cogent, are a yoke, which God has not designed the sons of men to bear. Discourse conc. Liturgies and their Impos. p. 44.

submit, yet still, as free, as was showed before.  
And hence I infer,

*Infer. 1.*

1. That though there be a ground and reason pretended for such a restraint whereby

is such a badge of Sovereignty, as no creature ought to usurp, or pretend to; being the peculiar Prerogative of the Supreme Majesty of Heaven, whose property it is, to will, because he will, Rom. 9. 15.

Nay further, Hereby you pull up the flood-gates of Justice, and expose us to an inundation of violence and oppression: you set infinite gins and snares to entrap the conscience withall; you go about to legitimate any spurious brood that shall be begotten between a brutish head and a wicked heart; you render Christian Liberty a meer cipher, and insignificant thing, and make Christians perfect slaves; For what is slavery, but to be subject to the will of another without reason? Whereas, though we must



by the Imposers would warrant its needfulness and necessity ; yet if it be but a *pretence*, and such a reason as will not *hold water*, nor indure the *light* and *weight* of an impartial examination ; 'tis equally offensive to *Christian Liberty*, as if there were no reason at all ; because 'tis *really* unjust, and so *really* a breach of Liberty.

*If it be here demanded, Who shall be judge of this, whether the reason of the Determination of such Indifferencies be substantial and firm, or no ?* Quest.

I answer briefly and clearly. Every one must Answ.  
judge for his own share, and his own work ; for so much as concerns himself, and which he must be responsible and accountable for to God. Every one must give an account of himself to God (Rom. 14. 12.) and of his actions, and therefore must first take account of himself and his actions, whether he act according to Rule. (1) The Magistrate (not the Subject) must judge for what concerns the making of the Law, and for what belongs to him in his capacity ; as, That the Law for the Matter of it, be not only *lawful*, but *expedient* ; that the Ends he propounds to himself be not *sinister* and *crooked*, as to tyrannize over his Subjects, to maintain factions and divisions among them, to get money for Dispensati-

(a) *Aquinas*, out of *Isidore*, makes three Conditions of a good Law.

(1) *Quod religioni congruat, in quantum scilicet est proportionatum legi divina.* (2) *Quod disciplinae conveniat, in quantum scilicet est proportionatum legi natura.* (3) *Quod saluti proficiat, in quantum scilicet est proportionatum utilitati humane,* 122. q. 95. a. 3.

(b) *Camero* allows us not only to seek a reason of the Churches Laws, *Non enim, faith he, vera Ecclesia libet leges ferre quarum non reddat rationem.* (*Praelect. Tom. 1. p. 367.*) but he will likewise have us in such things as concern the glory of God, not to obey the Laws of any Magistrates blindly and without reason. *Ibid. Engl. Pop. Cerem. p. 372.*

ons, &c. but upright and just, viz. to (a) promote the weal-publick, that his Subjects may lead peaceable and quiet lives under him, in all godliness and honesty, as the Apostle expresses it, 1 Tim. 2. 2. (2) Every Subject in particular, must judge for what concerns himself in his place to do, in obeying the Law: He must look before he leap, and (b) consider whether the acts of obedience required, be agreeable to the Rule of all our actions, viz. the revealed will of God, and such as he may safely answer for both to God and his own conscience. This I take to be the reason why generally in the Proëm of Laws, the grounds and occasions of them are laid down, that so the judgments of the Subjects may be satisfied about them;

and consequently that they may judge of those reasons, and of the Laws by those reasons.

Especially in religious affairs, every one must Eccl. 5. 1. see that he do not offer the sacrifice of fools, who

who know not or *consider not* what they do, but must be careful to render to God λογικὴν λατρείαν, a reasonable service, (Rom. 12. 1.) Such an examination, or judgement of discretion or discerning, was allowed and commended in reference to those Directions which were held forth even by persons infallibly inspired, *Act. 17. 11.* They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. Mark, they received readily, and yet searched. They made no more haste than good speed. But when by tryal they had found the Doctrine delivered to be of the right stamp, they presently received it for current coin. Now if this were commendable towards the Dictates of persons immediately inspired, much more in case of merely humane constitutions and injunctions, Laws or Canons. And as in the foregoing instance they made use of their Judgement of discretion in reference to matters of Doctrine, so we have also an example of it in point of Practice, *1 Cor. 10. 15.* I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. And this is that *Judicium privatae discretionis*, Judgement of discretion, or discerning, which all Protestants generally maintain and plead for against Papists, as belonging to private persons; who have eyes in their heads, as well as the Pope, or any other Governours whatever; and without which you transform men into (a) brutes and irrational tools. For a blind obedience is a brutish obedience; yea

(a) *Quiboc*  
judicium  
privatis e-  
ripiunt, bo-  
mines in  
belluas pla-  
nè trans-  
formant.  
Cum igitur  
dogma pro-  
ponitur  
credendum,  
aut præ-  
ceptum a-  
liquid fa-  
ciendum,  
quia cre-  
dere & fa-  
cere sunt  
actus mei, si  
me homi-  
nem ratio-  
nis partici-  
pem præ-  
stare velim,  
examinare  
oportet  
quicquid  
proponitur  
ad scienti-  
am meam.  
Daven. de  
Judice.  
cap. 3.

*Hist. of  
Quarrels  
of Paul 5.  
with State  
of Venice.  
p. 205.*

Object.

even Papists themselves, viz. the State of Venice in case of the Interdict by Paul the 5th maintain'd, *That when the Pope thunders out his censures, it's permitted to the Doctors, (who in that case are but private persons, only better able to judge) to consider whether he has proceeded clare errante, aut non errante.*

*If it be objected (as usually it is) that this will destroy all order, and then every man must be a Statesman. I answer,*

*Salut.*

1. Every man is bound under the danger of sin, or as he lies under the obligation of avoiding sin; to be exceeding careful that he judge righteous judgement, and to judge of things as they truly and really are; for in case of mistake, he is guilty of sin against God, both *immediately* (because he has commanded obedience) and *mediately* in his Deputy, who has made such a Law, and enjoyns such a Practice.

2. As to *standing Laws* concerning Civil affairs, this is a meer cavil, without any ground in experience. For where the people have an interest in the *Legislative* power, they do so well and fully understand their own concernments, that it's rare to find such Laws as are liable to just exceptions, and do not tend to the publick good, either for the maintaining propriety, encouraging trade, restraining abuses, or the like; except where some *intestine* difference has raised mens spirits.

rits, and begotten such animosities as set one party on work to crush the other, and to make Laws for the very nonce. But otherwise ordinarily they are such as no person of any thing like sober principles can scruple them, because they restrain *Liberty* upon good and just grounds: And if there are any other which possibly may have crept in by some corrupt custom, or are the *setlings* of any *Popish principle*, or *practice* (as that about *Divorce*, which by our Laws is only *a mensa & thoro*, but in no case *a vinculo*) or the like, and do not stand upon this bottom of *right reason*; it's no breach of order, or tendency to confusion, to question such Laws, and call them to account for their *tenure* and *title*, whether they hold *in capite*, or no.

3. 'Tis true indeed in *religious affairs*, men are apt to be more *imperious* and *imposing*, and to measure all others by their own *line*, and force them to a compliance with their humors and mode; either (with the Tyrant *Procrustes*) by *stretching* them out on the one hand to do what they would have them, or by *cutting* them short on the other hand, and *restraining* them in what they like not themselves; which is the temper of such persons especially, whose Religion is confin'd within the narrow limits of *bodily exercise*, of some few *beggarly rites* and *ceremonies*, and doth not run parallel with that latitude. (*Psal.* 119. 96.) that is in God's Commandments. And

this was the case many times at least, between the Bishops and Non-conformists formerly: If any would not keep pace with them, and come up to their garb in matter of *Ceremonies*, they endeavoured to spur, and prick him on by all violent ways imaginable: But in the more *substantial* and *vital* parts of Religion and Godliness, as, strict and conscientious sanctification of the Sabbath, painfulness in Preaching, &c. those that did *out-do* them, and *out-go* them herein, they were always *checking*, and *curbing*, and laying *ruhs* in their way. Now in this case, those persons are guilty of the disorder (if any be) who go about to impose and enforce such *indifferencies* and *unnecessaries* (if not *non-licets*), and not those that insist upon their *just liberty*.

4. For *temporary, occasional commands* of Magistrates, wherein perhaps some *Mysteries of State* are involved, the more weighty the business is which is required of the Subjects, (as engaging their lives, estates, or the like) the more circumspect should they be, and the more diligent in *pondering the path of their feet*, and not running rashly, *hand over head*, upon such undertakings. As on the one hand we must not be *pragmatically inquisitive* into the reasons of them (as the Reverend *Presbyterian Divines* well express it, in one of their *Addresses to the King*); so on the other hand, we must not shut our eyes against the light,

or

Prov. 4.  
26.



or disown and deny our own reason, by obeying those commands which apparently *interfere* with common sense, and violate the rules of common honesty. Thus much for this first Inference.

2. I infer further, That though there was a good ground and reason for the Determination at first, so that it was lawful and warrantable then, and *no infringement of Liberty*; yet if afterwards that *ground fails*, and that reason ceases, then to continue the restraint any longer is a breach of liberty; for that which is the *life and soul of the law* being gone, the law must needs *expire*, and remain a meer *carcass*. *E. g.* If eating of flesh-meat be forbidden at a certain season of the year upon this *Political* ground, and *Reason of state*, viz. for the *Preservation* and *Propagation* of Cattel; then when there is a sufficient *store* and *stock* of Cattel, the ground of the Law ceasing, the Law ought to cease; and if the Law continues any longer, 'tis a *breach of privilege*, and an *encroachment* upon our liberty. So when Paul enjoyns Timothy the use of a little Wine *1 Tim. 5.* for his *stomachs sake*, and *often infirmities*; when his *infirmities* are removed, and his *stomach* requires it not, he is no longer bound to the use of Wine. *23.*

3. Though the *Civil Liberties* of several Nations are different one from another, according to the diversity of circumstances; yet in *Christian Commonwealths* especially they

they should all agree in this general, not to be restrained but upon good reasons.

*Infer. 4.*

4. *Christian Liberty* is as well concern'd in *Civil*, as *Ecclesiastical* affairs; and is not only subject to infringement by *Ecclesiastical Laws* (as *Parsons* on *Gal. 5. 1.* affirms), but by *Civil* also. For though the power of *Magistrates* be of larger extent in *Civil* than *Ecclesiastical* affairs, and God has left more particulars to their determination in the former than in the latter, because mens reason will carry them a great deal further in those than in these, (A clear reason of the different extent of their power in these different cases, though *Dr. Sanderson* say he never could meet with any thing like a reason for it) Yet so far as his power reaches in these affairs (which is, in matters of *Worship*, not to institute any new rites or ceremonies, as parts of, and appendages to the worship of God; but only to regulate, according to the Rules of *Decency, Order, and Edification*, those necessary circumstances which are common to that with other actions of the like nature; so for *Doctrinals*, not to create any new *Article* of faith, but to explain those already in being, according to *Scripture*; and if controversies arise, to determine them by *Scripture*: and for *Discipline*, not to make what Laws they please, but to proceed according to *Scripture-rules* in the use of *censures*, and in absolving from them; I say, so far as the *Magistrates* power reaches

*De Oblig.  
Consc. p.  
240.*

reaches in these things) his Laws about them are equally obligatory with those about *Civil affairs*, and one does no more infringe *Christian Liberty* than another. For if either of them are without reason, they infringe it; if both are grounded upon Reason, then neither of them infringe it, no more one than another.

*But what if there be an encroachment upon our Liberty, what must we do for the preservation thereof?* Quest.

Take heed you be not *active* therein, or *accessory* and *consenting* thereto, and so make it your own act, and betray your liberty: Answ.  
But,

(1) For *Liberty of Judgement* (which no one can deprive you of without your own consent) be sure to *stand fast* in that, by not entertaining and sucking in any opinions contrary thereto, as if you were bound in conscience to judge that God did forbid, or command such or such things, and thereby lay a restraint upon the use of them. *Paul* often admonishes us to take heed that none *deceive, spoil, or beguile* us (*Col. 2. 8, 18. Beware lest any man spoil you: Let no man beguile you. 2 Thes. 2. 3. Let no man deceive you by any means*); intimating, that it is in our power to prevent it, and our fault, if we do not prevent it.

(2) For *Liberty of practice*, because that may be restrain'd whether we will or no, by  
com-

compulsion of the outward man, as by imprisonment, or the like, or in a *Moral* way, by penalties; in this latter case (1) we must not look upon such Impositions as laying any tie or obligation upon the conscience either *immediately* or *mediately*; and therefore must not take our selves bound in conscience to submit to them. 2. We must weigh the *penalties* we are to *undergo* with the *priviledges* we are to *part with*, and chuse the lighter. *E. g.* For a Minister to be hindred from executing his office, or a private person from receyving of the Sacrament is a *penalty*; and to serve God in that manner and method which I judge most agreeable to the Rules of the word, and most acceptable to him, is my *priviledge*; but I will rather part with this *priviledge*, as to some circumstantial point, wherein the substance and stress of the duty does not consist, than suffer that penalty of being deprived of the Ordinances.

In the other case, when a force lies upon us, and our liberty is restrain'd thereby, we are innocent and guiltless, because only *passive*, and it's done without our consent, which only makes us culpable. We may not yield up our liberties; yet if they be taken away from us, we may submit without sin.

Thus have I transcribed my thoughts, and stated the case as clearly as I could in this ravel'd point of *Christian Liberty*, by showing wherein it does consist; how far forth it is liable

liable to be imposed upon, and baffled by humane Constitutions, and what must be done for the asserting thereof.

The total Sum of the whole discourse is this : That though Obedience to Magistrates and Christian Liberty are very consistent, yet for Magistrates to lay a restraint upon Indifferencies meerly, *quia placet & liber*, is an abridgment and infragment of Christian Liberty, which we must not *willingly* admit of, nor be *accessory* to, though we may *submit*. But if they do it *quia expedit*, when there are sufficient reasons for it from any *circumstantial consideration*, so long as those reasons hold good (of which every one is to be judge, for so much as concerns his own practice), this is no breach at all. Our liberty remains still entire to us, notwithstanding such a determination.

Now, if any one shall stumble at this, and think it strange that I take off the lawfulness of the determination from the *will* (which perhaps they may call the *Authority*) of the Lawgiver, and lay it upon a *concurrence of circumstances*, and so attribute and ascribe that to *circumstances*, which I deny to *Authority*: I shall offer this (which is very observable) for their further satisfaction, *viz.* That a *concurrence of circumstances* (which I may call a *Providential*, or *emergent necessity* constituting and making up such an *extrinsecal goodness*, as I spake of before) may do that which

(2) *Providential necessity* may make that which is sinful scandalizing to be obedience to the 6th Commandment (as rather to eat *Idolothytes* than to starve), but the will of Superiors can make no such change. *Rutherford of Scand. p. 78. Divine necessity by Gods Ordinance alters the case, not humane, by enforcing authority. Tailor of circumsp. Walk. c. 21.*

*no humane Authority can.*

(4) For it can make that which (otherwise and abstracting from those circumstances) is unlawful, to become lawful, much more then that which otherwise is but indifferent, to be necessary. I say, a concurrence of circumstances may make that which otherwise is unlawful to be lawful, as is evident by *David's* eating the *shew-bread* when he was an hungred, which otherwise

had been unlawful; and therefore the *Jews*, when there was no such *providential necessity*, chose rather to dye than to eat *swines-flesh*, (forbidden by God, as the *shew-bread* was) though commanded by man. So if *Saul* and his Army had been ready to starve, and could have got no other provision but the *Amalekites* cattel, certainly God's preferring mercy before sacrifice, would have warranted them to have killed and eaten thereof, though otherwise they were commanded to destroy them, and reserve none. Now if that in those things which otherwise are unlawful, a concurrence of circumstances can do that which no humane authority can, viz. make them lawful; then much more in Indifferencies may it



it do that which no humane authority can, viz. lay a restraint upon the use of them, as is evident by this instance. Had *Daniel* forbore the Ceremony of kneeling at prayer, or looking towards *Jerusalem*, out of any natural necessity, or by reason of any infirmity whereby it might have been prejudicial to his life, it had been none offence: But when there is no such necessity, but only he is forbidden to pray by a Law, and that upon pain of death, he will not obey. The reason whereof is very well rendred by the learned *Rutherford*, Because God places, saith he, acts of providential necessity, as emergent significations of his approving will, which are to us in place of a divine Commandment of God's revealed will; and these providential acts of necessity do no less oblige us to moral Obedience, than any of the express written Commandments of God. But then this holds only (as he adds elsewhere) in commands affirmative and positive, so as there can be no sin eligible by such a case; but I think he should have said, only in positive commands; for the command about the *shew-bread* was negative, yet *David's* necessity dispenc'd with it. Thus we have paid the first General its portion, and discharged that Obligation.

Treat. of  
Scand. p.  
81.

p. 83.

Proceed we now to the second General, concerning *Indifferency*, in consideration of this Question:

What

**Quest.** What is the general nature of those indifferent things about which Christians have this liberty?

**Answ.** I answer, in general, Indifferency is a

(a) lying in the middle between two extremes; or (b) that whereby things do equally, without any difference agree to, or dissent from, those extremes to which they have reference and relation. This is twofold, (c) *Intrinsical*, material, or specific, and *extrinsical* or *circumstantial* (opposite to that twofold goodness I spake of before). This I gather from the Apostles words, 1 Cor. 6. 12. *All things are lawful for me* (i. e. all such things as are intrinsically and in

their own nature indifferent), *but all things are not expedient*, i. e. not indifferent in regard of circumstances. Let this distinction be well marked, for (being dextrously managed) it will serve as a clue to unlabyrinth us, a key to open most of the intricacies, and a πᾶν φάρμακον, to solve the difficulties, and solve the doubts in this point, concerning the nature of this *intrinsical* indifferency; I find some contest about the extremes to which it should relate; the distinct and clear determination whereof, is of great moment to

to the true state and resolution of the Question. The acute Author of the \* *Dispute against English-Popish Ceremonies*, contends stiffly, that the extremes are good and evil, and not necessary and unlawful. On the other side, The Bishops commission'd for the Review and Alteration of the Liturgy, make the extremes to be commanded and forbidden, not good and evil; for they say expressly, *indifferent things may be really good*. Their words are these, *Those things which we call indifferent, because neither expressly commanded nor forbidden by God, have in them a real goodness*. Answ. to Except. N. 18. Sect. 8. Yea, Mr. Bradshaw too goes this way. *Those things, saith he, are called in a moral respect indifferent (which is the indifferency we are speaking of) (whether they be qualities, inclinations, habits or actions) that have in them neither virtue nor vice. Even such actions of man's will are most frequent that are neither commanded nor forbidden in the word of God*. And so another learned person. *The nature of indifference lies not in any thing intermediate between good and bad, but in something undetermined by divine Laws, as to the necessity of it; so that if we speak as to the extremes of it, it is something lying between a necessary duty, and an intrinsecal evil: and so Ames, and many others. If this be any more than a Logomachy, and the difference be not merely verbal (and if good and evil be under-*

\* Part 4:  
c. 2. sect. 7.

Treat. of  
Indiffer-  
ence, c. 3:  
sect. 6.

Stillingsf.  
Iren. c. 3:  
sect. 8. p.  
50.

stood of that which is *Morally* so, for my part. I think it will scarce amount to any more, because nothing is morally good or evil, but what is made so by some discovery of God's will). then I cannot but cast in my *vote* and *vote* to the latter scale; and accordingly shall give you the full notion and description of this *Intrinsic* indifference, as I have gather'd it out of several, rendring (in the margin) to every one his peculiar due.

Those actions are intrinsically indifferent, that have in their matter neither (a) Moral goodness nor illness, (b) virtue nor vice, as being (c) apparent in their whole kind neither commanded nor forbidden, either by the (d) Law of Nature, Reason in its notion, a negation of Moral goodness and illness. I say, *Signanter*, of Moral goodness and illness, because the most indifferent actions are transcendently, and may be naturally good. *Feaver's Treat. of Indiff. pag. 2.* (b) *Bradsh. Treat. of Indiff. c. 8. sect. 6.* (c) *Res mediae sunt, quarum tota species nulla divina lege (naturali vel positiva) aut precipitur, aut prohibetur. Sanderf. de Oblig. Consc. prælect. 6. sect. 22. p. 235. Alia in suo genere indifferens est, quando ejus objectum nihil includit, quod pertinet ad voluntatem Dei vel precipientem vel prohibentem. Amef. Medull. l. 2. c. 3. sect. 14. Actiones quæ neque imperantur neque prohibentur, neque obediunt, neque inobediunt rationem habent in sua intrinsicâ natura, sunt indifferentes aut media. Amef. Cas. Consc. l. 3. c. 18. sect. 4.* (d) *Bradsh. of Indiff. c. 8. sect. 5.*

son, or Scripture, but (e) left free and arbitrary, so that they may (f) either be done or not, without sin, or transgression of any Law; Or more briefly, in the Apostles words (and therefore more safely), 'Tis that which neither commendeth nor discommendeth us to God; by doing or forbearing whereof we are either better or worse, more or less acceptable to him. To this purpose the Apostle speaks (1 Cor. 8. 8.) concerning meat and eating, i. e. not eating in general (as some carry it) for that is a duty of the 6th Command-

ment; but eating this or that, or any one kind of meat in particular; that is indifferent, and commends us not to God: He that eats the fat, and drinks the sweet, is no more acceptable to God, than he that eats the leau, and drinks the sour: and this is applicable to a world of other things. Once more, That is indifferent, which makes neither one way nor other, or not more one way than another, for the glory of God; when equal glory is brought to God either way. This notion of it I gather from Rom. 14. 6. He that regardeth a day, re-

(e) The nature of things indifferent, is neither to be commanded, nor forbidden, but left free and arbitrary. Hooker of Eccl. Pol. p. 59.

(f) These things are implied in an indifferent action. (1) Absolute undetermination, as to the general nature of the act, by a divine Law, that God has left it free for men to do it or no. (2) That one part has not more propension to the rule than the other. (3) That neither part hath any repugnancy to the rule. Stillingfl. Iren. c. 3. sect. 8. p. 50.



gards it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not a day, to the Lord he doth not regard it, &c. i. e. both of them aim at God's honour, and real tribute of glory redounds to him either way; and therefore both are lawful. So then, we may conceive the case concerning these In-

(a) *Illud secundum speciem bonum est, quod lege Dei ita praeceptum est, ut non sit fas homini illud negligere, aut quicquam facere, quod ei repugnet: Et illud malum est, quod lege Dei ita prohibitum est, ut non sit fas homini illud admittere, aut praescribere quocunque prae-textu.* Forbes, Iren. l. 1. c. 18. sect. 13.

differencies, thus: some things are commanded (a) in specie, and in their whole kind; as to pray, hear, give alms, &c. These are intrinsically, morally good, or necessary, and duties, which are in their own nature pleasing and acceptable to God, and whereby glory redounds to him; so that in the general, and abstracting from circumstances, it is better, and more agree-

able to God's will, and more pleasing to him, to pray, than not to pray; and therefore though a man be not bound to pray at all times, yet always to omit it, and never to pray, is sinful. Other things are forbidden in specie, as to steal, lye, commit adultery, &c. These are in their own nature evil and unlawful, and therefore can never be made good by any circumstances whatsoever. Others are neither commanded, nor forbidden in specie, but lye between both by way of contradiction, as not forbidden or unlawful, but lawful; not commanded or necessary,



cessary, but arbitrary or unnecessary ; and so are left indifferent either to be done, or not to be done, according as

(a) circumstances require ; so that though a man should never do them in all his life-time, he should not sin ; as to laugh, ride, &c.

(a) Indifferency taken in specie, as to the nature of the act, inclines neither way ; but supposing it lye under positive determinations, either by Law or Circumstances, it then necessarily enclines either to the nature of good or evil. Stillingfl. Iren. p. 51.

The first sort of actions are good *per se* ; and if they be evil, 'tis only *per accidens* ; the second are evil *per se*, yet may be good *per accidens*, as God can bring light out of darkness, &c. The third are neither good nor evil *per se*, but may be either *per accidens*. The first cannot universally and always be omitted without sin ; the second cannot at any time whatsoever be done without sin ; the third may be either done, or left undone without sin. The first are necessary to be done some time or other ; the second necessary to be omitted, and forborn at all times ; the third neither necessary to be done, or left undone, but may be either done or not, as circumstances require. The first commendeth us to God, the second discommendeth, the third doth neither. By the first we are the better, by the second the worse, by the third neither better nor worse. In the first, we must therefore set all circumstances in order, because they must be done ;

In the last, we must therefore do them, because *circumstances call for it*: one must be done, because the *circumstances are good*; in the other, we must *make the circumstances good*, because they must be done; as 'tis between *Holy-days of God's and Man's institution*; *Holy duties must be performed on God's Holy days*, because the days are holy; but man's days are holy, because holy Duties must be performed on them; and therefore for man's days, 'tis more proper to say, they are *Days set a-part for holy Duties*, than that they are *Holy-days*. Thus much for the nature of things *intrinsically* indifferent.

*Those things are Extrinsically indifferent, which have their whole suit of circumstances (as I may call it) wherein they are drest up, indifferent, and neither vertuous nor vicious, when there is no Moral goodness in any of the circumstances. e. g. It's indifferent whether a man dine in the Hall or Parlor; at eleven a Clock, or twelve; on fish, or flesh, &c. These particular circumstances are not determined either Pro or Con, by any Precept or Prohibition, and therefore are indifferent. And here be it remarked and remembred,*

(1) That an action *intrinsically good*, may have some *indifferent circumstances* put on it; as, in hearing the word, 'tis indifferent whether I sit or stand, wear a Cloak or a Coat, &c.

(2) An action *intrinsically indifferent* may have some *circumstances good*, which may render it necessary. *e. g.* If I have a commodity, it is indifferent for me either to sell it, or use it my self; but if there comes one that has extraordinary need of it, I am bound to let him have it; so in those several cases before mentioned, wherein Liberty in things indifferent may be restrained.

(3) There are general Rules concerning circumstances, which must be brought down and applied to particulars, by humane wisdom and discretion, for the regulating and right ordering of them. *e. g.*

1. For *Persons*. When actions are peculiar to an office, or condition of life, then none must perform them but persons in that capacity; either of the office, as in the Ministry; or of the condition, as in Marriage. Quis.

2. For *Place*. Actions must be done in places suitable and convenient: so Christ seeing the multitudes went up into a Mountain to preach (*Matth. 5. 1.*) as at other times in private houses, *Luk. 14. 1, 12, 13.* Ubi.

3. For *Means*. We must use only lawful means, and not do evil that good may come of it, *Rom. 3. 8.* Quibus auxiliis.

4. For the *End*. We must do all to the glory of God, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* Which words (as *Capreolus* observeth) may be understood two manner of ways. Cur. L. 2. dist. 40. qn. 1.

(1) *Negatively*, That we must do nothing against God's glory, whereby he may be dishonoured.

(2) *Affirmatively*, And so actions may have a threefold reference to the glory of God (as both *Capreolus* and *Scotus*, 2. *Sent. dist.* 41. observe). (1) *Habitual*, where there is the *habitus* of grace: and *this is not enough*. (2) *Actual*, when we *actually* think of, and aim at the glory of God: and this is *more than is required in all performances*; for though it ought frequently to be done, yet it is not necessary in every action. Well it may be our *happiness* in the *next* life, but cannot be our *duty* in this, because it would leave no room nor place for other duties. (3) *Virtual*, which presupposes the two former, and adds further, (1) The *Negation* of any other end contrary to the glory of God, and (2) a *natural tendency* of the action to some end subordinate to the glory of God, and naturally referrible thereto.

**Quomodo.** 5. For the *Manner*, whether in regard of the *inward frame of spirit*, or *outward behaviour*; and here are many rules in both respects, fitted for several occasions, as 'tis faith, &c. decently, &c.

**Quando.** 6. For the *Time*. It must be done *in season*, *Psal.* 1. 3. *He brings forth fruit in due season*. (4) Every action (though in its own nature, *secundum speciem*, and in regard of the *Master* it be *indifferent*, yet) when cloathed with its whole

whole *suit, systeme, and compages* of individuating circumstances, is necessarily either good or evil, according to its *consonance or dissonance* from the Rules before laid down. Though it have not any *antecedent* good or evil, to render it *necessary, or unlawful*, yet it must have a *concomitant* good or evil, whereby it becomes necessarily either good or evil *when it is done*. There's a great dust raised by *Scotus, Bonaventure, and others* of the *School-men* about this, who hold the negative. I shall not wade far into the controverſie (you may see it learnedly, clearly, and satisfactorily handled, *Jeanes Scholaſt. & Pract. Divin. part. 2. p. 2. Engl. Pop. Cerem. part. 4. c. 3.*) only give you some brief hints about it. Observe,

(1) The question is not to be understood of *indeliberate* actions, which proceed either from the *disposition of natural qualities*, as to hunger, thirst, &c. or from the force of *imagination*; as to scratch the head, &c. but of actions properly *humane*.

(2) Not of actions considered only in regard of their *matter, or object*, but *circumstances*.

(3) Nor of actions or circumstances *compared one with another* (for so there is no question, but there may be some action or circumstance, neither better nor worse (as far as we can judge) than another), but of things considered *absolutely, and by themselves*.

(4) Nor

(4) Nor of Indifference, as it lies between commanded and forbidden, but between good and evil.

(5) Not of every particular circumstance, but of all together. And accordingly I affirm, That no deliberate action considered absolutely and singly by it self, and adequately with its whole suit of individuating circumstances, but is either good or evil : And I prove it both by Scripture, Reason, and Authority.

1. For Scripture. Thus much is plainly intimated by Christ, *Mat. 12. 36* Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement, i. e. for every unprofitable, unfruitful word, that brings good neither to speaker nor hearer, then they are not indifferent; and if words, when cloathed with circumstances, cannot be indifferent, then neither Thoughts nor Works, which are as much the issue and product of reason, as speech.

2. For Reason. 'Tis this : Either they are agreeable to those Rules laid down in the Word of God, for regulating all our actions (before mentioned) or not (for *Contradictio caret omni medio*) : If they be agreeable to the Rule, they are good (for goodness is Conformity to the Rule), if not, they are evil : Even as a Statuary or carver of Images *Cas. Consc.* ('tis Ames's comparison) oft-times has no peculiar reason to make this Image rather than that ; yet if he make any at all, either he



he follows the rules of his Art, and then he makes a good statue, or he departs from those rules, and then he makes a bad one, and does not work like an artist; so many times it may be to a Christian a matter merely indifferent to do such a thing at this time or another, in this place or another, &c. and may be left to his own choice and pleasure therein; but yet as he is a Christian, he is obliged to regard such and such circumstances in all his actions; and therefore whatsoever he does, he doth it either well or ill; for either he observes these circumstances, and then his action is good; or he neglects them, and then 'tis bad.

3. For Authority. *Aquinas* determines the question thus: 122. q. 18. 2. 9. *Quemvis actum humanum in individuo consideratum, quando ex deliberatâ ratione procedit, bonum esse vel malum, necesse est.* So another great Scholar of our own, *Nulla est individua actio humana quæ est indifferens, sed propter circumstantias necessario vel bona vel mala, si Thomæ & omnibus Thomistis credimus.* Mort. Ap. part 1. l. 1. c. 47. I shall need to add no more, because this last testimony is pregnant with many others. Yet for all this, I add,

(5) And lastly, An action even in *individuo* may be indifferent in respect of any Precept or Prohibition, though not in respect of good and evil. There may be the necessity of something in an action, when it is done, to make  
it

Stillingsf.  
Iren. p. 52.

it good (*viz. bonitas intentionis, or directionis, and bonitas principii*), and yet the action it self *pro hic & nunc*, be no ways necessary, but indifferent, and a matter of liberty. This is very well illustrated by one, by comparing it with what is usually said of God's particular actions, That God is free in himself either to do, or not to do that action (as suppose, the Creation of the world); but when he does it, he must necessarily do it with that goodness, holiness, and wisdom, which is suitable to his nature; so may many actions of men be in themselves indifferent, and yet there must be a concomitant necessity of good intention and principle to make the action good. But this concomitant necessity does not destroy the radical indifference of the action it self; it is only an antecedent necessity from the obligation of the Law, which destroys indifference. Thus much also for the nature of this circumstantial, extrinsecal indifference.

Again, This circumstantial indifference is either *Absolute*, or *Comparative*. *Absolute*, When a thing being considered alone by it self, without relation to others, is neither good nor evil. *Comparative*, When a thing being compared with others, is neither better nor worse than they, but they are indifferently and alike good or evil; as to eat at ten a Clock, or eleven, &c. The use of these two distinctions will appear anon.

Dub.

Now the grand difficulty in this point is, Whether the command of Authority does take away the indifference of a thing, so as to make it become necessary,

necessary, and consequently, not the matter of scandal (given)? There's great sticking and struggling Pro and Con, between the Conformists and Non-conformists, especially on the Conformists part, because this is the main Bulwark to which they retreat, when beaten off from other arguments concerning the Lawfulness, expediency, necessity of the Ceremonies, that they are indifferent; and therefore when commanded by authority, become necessary, because these indifferent things are the (a) proper matter of humane Laws.

I desire to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsars, and to speak indifferently (in this point of indifference) between Magistrate and Subject, not encroaching (voluntarily) upon either. Therefore,

(a) *Res adiaphora sunt legum humanarum propriissima & maxime idonea materia. Sanderf. de Oblig. Consc. p. 235. & paulo post, Restant sola adiaphora, velut campus in quo se exerceat, exeratq; vim illa suam inducendi obligationem ubi nulla præfuit potestas humana. p. 236.*

*Solut.* I answer in general, according to the grounds laid down, That where a thing is indifferent intrinsically, or in its own nature, but not circumstantially, but has some circumstantial goodness and necessity, or, there is some good reason from some circumstance for the enjoying of it, there the command renders it necessary; but where there is not so much as any circumstantial goodness and necessity, or any good reason from some circumstance, there the command cannot make

(a) *It was not the force or authority of the Canon (Aet. 13.) but the reason and ground whereupon the Canon was made, which caused the necessity of abstaining, saith Sprint (an advocate for Conformity) Reply to Anf. p. 258.*

make it (a) necessary. What God has left indifferent, and not made necessary neither in its own nature, nor by any particular circumstance, no man has power to make so; for no man has any authority or power, but what is given him from above, John 19.

11. Jam. 1. 17. If it be answered, they have authority in the general, which includes this particular. I reply: (1) No man has any authority at all, either in general, or particular, directly, or indirectly, { virtually, or formally, to do injustice; but to take away a mans right and due (his liberty)

(b) *Where there is no other reason to warrant the doing of what a humane Law prescribes, besides the bare will and authority of the Law-maker, in this case a humane Law cannot bind us to obedience. Engl. Pop. Cerem. Epist. p. 14.*

(c) *Lex est aliquid pertinens ad rationem, quum sit regula & humanorum actuum mensura. Aqu. 122. q. 90. 2. 1.*

without any reason, is to do injustice Ergo. Again, (2) Such a command cannot render the thing commanded necessary, because it doth not at all (b) oblige, for it has no dependence upon, nor coherence with the Will of God; it is no way agreeable to his Will, which I prove thus: That command which has no (c) reason for it, but only the will of the Lawgiver, has

has no (a) dependance upon the Will of God, nor coherence with it (for then that would be a good and sufficient reason), or is no way agreeable to the Will of God, either in general or particular, and therefore has no obligation following upon it; for that

(b) *Obligation of a Law* which we speak of, is no-

thing but the necessity of obeying under pain of sin against God. That is an excellent notion of *Petrus de Alliaco* (for which I am beholding to a Reverend and Learned Divine). That ~~as~~ the will of God exerting and putting forth his natural power or strength, is in natural things the first efficient Cause; so the will of God exerting his moral power or authority, is in moral things the first obliging Rule: And as all things in nature all dependently upon the will of God, putting forth his natural power as the first efficient cause; so in Morality, all Laws oblige dependently upon the will of God, putting forth his Moral power as the first obliging Rule. Whence I infer, That where there is no intimation of God's Will, neither express nor implicit, in the nature of the thing, nor in any circumstance, there can no obligation arise (3) That command which has no Conformity to the rule and end of all Laws (the \* publick good) can have

(a) *Teste Augustino, nihil est justum ac legitimum in temporali lege, quod non sit ex aeternâ lege profectum.*

*Aqu. 12x. q. 93. a. 3.*

(b) *Leges humana obligant homines in foro conscientiae, ratione legis aeternae, à qua derivantur. Id. q. 96. a. 4.*

*Gilbert's*

*Affize*

*Serm. on*

*Jam. 2. 12.*

*p. 12.*

\* *Neceffe*

*est legem*

*semper ad*

*bonum*

*commune*

*ordinari.*

*Aqu. 12x.*

*ad q. 90. a. 1.*



no obligation at all following upon it; for the due matter of a Law is wanting; but such a command has no Conformity, &c. *Ergo.*

(4) That the Command of Authority does not render *such* an indifferent thing necessary, may be proved, I think, undeniably, from that passage, mentioned *Matth. 15. 1-9. Mark 7. 1-13.* concerning the Disciples eating with unwalshen hands; for which they are complained of by the Scribes and Pharisees (those great *Masters of Ceremonies*) to Christ, as transgressors of the *Tradition of the Elders*: But Christ is so far from condemning, that he justifies and vindicates them for it; and on the contrary, condemns their Antagonists, for standing so strictly, and laying so much stress upon such unnecessary trifles. Here I observe, First, That the Rite, or Ceremony in question was in it self *indifferent*, i. e. neither commanded nor forbidden by any Law of God; and so far from being unlawful, that it seems rather a matter of civil decency and good manners. Secondly, This was commanded by a lawful Authority; for (1) the Scribes and Pharisees (who here urged it, and stickled for it) *sate in Moses's seat*, (*Mat. 23. 2.*) i. e. were the Rulers of the people (or some of them at least) who did succeed *Moses* in the ordinary office of Teaching and Ruling the people. And (2) it was a *Tradition of the Elders*: Now the *Elders* were the



the *Sanhedrim*, that is, the Supreme Authority of the Nation; and, a *Tradition of the Elders*, is a Resolution, Constitution, or Determination of such a case made by them, who therefore are called *מרי הלכהין*, *Domini constitutionum juridicarum*. Thirdly, This constitution of Authority did not render this indifferent practice, or usage, necessary, as is evident from the whole drift and scope of our Saviour Christ's discourse here. From all which, the conclusion or inference holds firm and strong, That an indifferent thing commanded by lawful Authority, is not thereby made necessary.

For the further clearing hereof, I shall pass from one end of my thoughts to the other by these steps, having first prepared the way by these Distinctions.

First, I distinguish between the *Matter* and the *Form* of a Command; or, between the thing commanded, and the *stamp* of Authority set upon it to make it *current*. The ground of this distinction is plain in reason.

Secondly, I distinguish between an *Intrinsic* and an *Extrinsic* Indifference (as before).

Thirdly, I distinguish between *unlawful* and *inconvenient*. This I ground upon the Apostles words, 1 Cor. 6. 12. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient*. Where he supposes, that things may be *lawful* in some respect, but *inconvenient* or *inexpedient*.

*pedient* in others. Whence I gather, (1) That *unlawful* and *inconvenient* are not the same; no more than *lawful* and *convenient*; for *Contrariorum eadem est ratio*. (2) I further gather the *nature of inconvenient*, or *inexpedient*, and how it differs from *unlawful*, viz. That *inconvenient* or *inexpedient* is only an *irregular circumstance of something in its own nature lawful*. He is there speaking of indifferent things, and tells us, That though in their own nature these be all lawful to make use of, yet they may be so circumstantiated, as to render them *inconvenient*, or *inexpedient*. Which circumstantial irregularity puts on such a kind of evil, as the good or rule it offends against, is of; if it be only against some *debitum naturæ*, then 'tis *malum physicum*, or *naturale*; as to fast to the detriment of a mans health, to eat that which agrees not with his constitution: If against good manners, then 'tis *malum morale*, as to be slovenly in eating: either of these irregularities render a thing, but *inexpedient*: But if it be against any Command of God, then 'tis *malum Theologicum*, or *peccatum*, and so falls in with *unlawful*.

Fourthly, I distinguish between a *particular inconvenience*, which is only so to some particular persons, or at some particular time; and a *general inconvenience*, which is alike inconvenient to all persons, at all times, and in all places. This distinction has common experience to warrant its validity.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, I distinguish between *submission for wrath*; and *for conscience-sake*, i. e. meerly for fear of the penalty, or else for fear of sin, and to avoid that which he should be guilty of in case of disobedience and non-submission. This distinction the Apostle makes to my hand, *Rom. 13. 5.*

Sixthly, I distinguish between an *arbitrary* and a *necessary submission*; where there is *no sin* in the submission, and yet 'tis *not a duty*, but free and arbitrary; and where there is *sin* in the non-submission, and submission is a duty and necessary. The ground of this distinction will appear afterwards.

Now these distinctions I apply thus.

*Prop. 1.* It is certain that the *Command of lawful authority*, *quatenus command*, i. e. the *form of the Command*, doth not necessarily bring an obligation to obedience along with it: The obligation does not arise meerly from the *form*; for then every command, or every thing having the stamp of Authority upon it, should oblige; which none will say. Therefore,

*That Magistrates ought to be obeyed in things good and lawful*, does not arise from the authority vested in themselves, but from the immediate command of God, that in such things they ought to be obeyed. Discourse conc. Liturg. p. 55.

2. The *Matter of the Command* must have some influence into the obligation thereof. There being only the *Matter* and *Form*, if the *Form* alone

lone cannot do it; then the *Matter* must do something towards it. Yet,

3. Not every Command neither *de materiâ licitâ* does oblige, because due circumstances also must be observed (as was shewed before), whereby it may be prepared and made habitable for the form to dwell in. But,

4. The matter must be lawful (i. e. either necessary, or indifferent, at least) and also duly circumstantiated. He is the Minister of God to thee for good, saith the Apostle, Rom. 13. 4. Therefore if it be not good, at least extrinsically, and in respect of circumstances (which an inconveniency or inexpediency is not) he is not the Minister of God therein. Then,

5. That which is both lawful in its own nature, and moreover cloathed with a bandsome dress of circumstances, when commanded, becomes necessary; and submission thereto a duty, and must be done for conscience-sake, and the neglect thereof is a sin. I lay the formality of the obligation, neither upon the matter nor form, singly considered, but upon the union, or concurrence of both, so as that the matter must have some kind of goodness, either *intrinsecal* or *circumstantial*, as the foundation; whence there arises *obligatio fundamentalis*, and then the command, supervening upon that matter, produces *obligationem formalem*; both together make the obligation perfect and complete: Either alone is but like a single knot, which

which does not tie hard, but both together make a double knot, which holds fast.

6. *That which is lawful in its own nature, and generally convenient, and has only some particular inconvenience attending it, does also become necessary when commanded*, because the general respect outweighs the particular; and therefore, in general, all are bound to obey for conscience-sake; and those particular persons to whom it is inconvenient, must either get a dispensation, or undergo the inconvenience for the general good. *E. g.* If the use of Fish be convenient for a Nation, and thereupon a Law be made to enjoyn the eating thereof at such a time of the year, then obedience is necessary; and though this be inconvenient for some persons, whose constitutions agree not with it, yet they must either obey, and so indure the inconvenience, or procure a dispensation. But,

7. *That which is lawful in its own nature, if attended with some irregular circumstances which render it generally inconvenient and inexpedient, though commanded, does not become necessary, nor submission thereto a duty, nor neglect thereof a sin.* The reason is, because bare authority without reason, lays no obligation upon the conscience (as was proved before): but here is only bare authority without reason; for the reason of the command, where the matter of it is indifferent, must be fetched from the expediency and conveniency of its

circumstances ; which not being to be found here in the case supposed, there is no reason neither, and so obliges not the conscience : Submission is not a duty ; we are not bound to obey for conscience-sake.

I know some are of opinion, that it *may be a duty to obey, where it is a sin to command.* But against that Position, I have this argument. Obligation to obedience, and authority to command, are Correlates ; so that { where there is no authority to command, there can be no obligation to obey : (*viz.* by vertue of that Command ; for possibly an obligation may arise upon some other account, as we shall see presently, in *Propos. 9.*) But here is no authority to command ; for we suppose the Magistrate sins in commanding. Now sure, no man has authority to sin. Besides, the Magistrates authority reaches only to that which is good, as was before shewed out of the Apostles words, *Rom. 13. 4.* and elsewhere he tells us, all Ecclesiastical authority is for *Edification* only, *Eph. 4. 12.* Yet,

8. *Where the inconvenience attending the command, is only such as keeps within the compass of some natural or civil evil, and sinks not down into a sin or transgression of some Law of God, there, though obedience does not become necessary and a duty, and I am not bound to obey for conscience-sake, yet I may submit for wrath, and for fear of such a penalty as will outweigh the advantage*



*vantage I shall have by non-submission.* And this by vertue of that Rule, *Ex duobus malis, minimum* ; it's better to undergo an *inconvenience*, than a *mischief*. *E.g.* If I may not hear a Sermon with my hat on, under penalty of 5 l. though it be something prejudicial to my health to sit uncover'd, and so a natural inconvenience ; yet if the advantage I shall get by non-submission be not so great as the penalty I shall incur, I may submit : So, if a Thief will either make me swear to conceal him, or take away my life, though it be a Political inconvenience ; yet rather than lose my life, I may submit to it. Nay.

9. *If the penalty be such as would hinder me from the performance of a necessary duty, then obedience may accidentally, and in that respect become* (a) *necessary, not-*

*withstanding such a circum-*  
*stantial inconvenience.* *E.g.* If that either I must kneel at receiving the Sacrament, or cannot be admitted to partake thereof ; if I judge kneeling (not unlawful in it self, but) only inconvenient, in respect of its unsuitableness to the nature of the Ordinance, then I am (accidentally)

bound to kneel, rather than to omit receiving (a necessary duty) for that inconveni-

(a) *An inconvenient mode of worship is a sin in the imposer, and in the chuser, and voluntary user, that might offer God better, and will not, Mal. 1. 13, 14. and yet it may be not only lawful, but a duty to him, that by violence is necessitated to offer up that or none. Grand Debate. Reply to Answ. sect. 5.*

ence. Again, If I must either baptize a child at the Font, or be deprived of the exercise of my Ministry, though I judge Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism at the Font (which always stands at the lower end of the Church, where the Congregation cannot so well hear) not so convenient as at the reading-Pew; yet rather than be deprived of the exercise of my Ministry for such a circumstance, I ought to submit to such an inconvenience. So, though I judge such a form inconvenient, yet if I must use that, or not exercise my Ministry; the latter being a duty, I ought to submit to the former. On this ground, I suppose, Calvin went in using wafer-cakes in the Administration of the Lords Supper: For, at first he refused to administer the Communion with unleavened bread and wafer-cakes, and was thereupon compelled to depart out of the City; but afterwards he was received again upon his allowance of that same kind of bread. *De quo postea restitutus, nunquam commendandum putavit; minime tamen dissimulans, quod alioqui magis esset probaturus, saith Beza.* In all these cases, Edification is the end, Decency and Order the means; now the end is that which principally we must be ruled by in these things; and therefore where a more convenient means cannot be had, by reason of any either natural or moral hinderance, there a less convenient becomes necessary, so  
long

long as the End may be attain'd thereby.  
Yea further yet.

10. *In the case put, I may not only do that which I judge to be inconvenient, but suffer another to do that which I judge to be unlawful, rather than be deprived of a necessary Ordinance. E. g. If either I must have my Child baptized with the sign of the Cross, or not baptized at all, I may suffer it to be done in that way, though I judge it an unlawful addition; because the manner concerns him that does it, not me (at least, not so much) so long as there is all the essence. He must be responsible for any irregularity in the manner, not I. Thus Jacob took Laban's Oath, though by his Idols. And Christ did joyn with the Jewish Church in their Administrations of God's Ordinances, though there were many Corruptions therein, rather than not partake of the Ordinances at all. But,*

11. *If the inconvenience be such as would overthrow the main end of the duty, and is inconsistent therewith, then the indifferency is so far from becoming necessary, that notwithstanding the command it is unlawful, and I may not obey, whatever the penalty be. E. g. If I may not pray or read in the Congregation, but with such a tone and modulation of the voice, as would render what is so prayed or read unintelligible; I must rather suffer any penalty, than perform the duty in such a manner, because the Congregation cannot be edified thereby,*  
nor

nor understandingly joyn with me therein ;  
and so I do but take God's name in vain.

Lastly, In all these cases there is left unto  
every private person a Judgement of Discretion,  
to discern and try whether the thing commanded

be (a) lawful, or no, and  
how far forth the reasons that  
are publickly held forth to  
bottom the command upon,  
are solid and valid (as was  
shewed before ) Some in-  
deed object, That this will  
overthrow all obedience,  
if Children, Servants, &c.  
are not bound to obey, till  
they be satisfied of the  
lawfulness of the Com-  
mand. But I answer,  
Though 'tis true, the same  
Command (*viz.* the fifth)  
which enjoyns obedience  
to Parents and Masters,  
enjoyns obedience to Ma-  
gistrates also ; yet I con-  
ceive there is a different  
tie, and that Subjects are  
not so strictly bound to  
Magistrates, as Children  
are to their Parents, or

(a) Ille judicat *id est* iudicet,  
& per modum privatae dis-  
cretionis, qui de sensu, aequi-  
tate, aut veritate dogmatis,  
sive sententiae propositae à ju-  
dicibus supra nominatis, ju-  
dicat, sine ulla potestate pub-  
licâ, tantum comprehendendo,  
approbando, & intellectum  
suum admittendo. Actus enim  
intelligendi, non exercetur si-  
ne actu judicandi. De iudicis  
cujuscunque subordinati defi-  
nitionibus adhibetur hoc iudi-  
cium, non solum ut intelliga-  
tur ejus sententia, sed etiam  
ut Aequitas, seu Veritas e-  
jusdem, & consensio cum le-  
ge Supremi Iudicis perci-  
piatur, & obedientis animo  
persuadeatur, Daven. de Ju-  
dice. c. 3.

Servants to their Masters. And therefore  
'tis observable, that when the Apostle lays  
out the particulars of this obedience, he bids  
Chil-

Children obey their Parents *in all things*, Col. 3. 20. viz. *in the Lord* (as he expounds it, Eph. 6. 1.) *i. e.* in whatsoever is agreeable to God's will, and not contrary thereto. And so 'tis for the obedience of Servants, Col. 3. 22. *Servants obey in all things your Masters according to the flesh.* And so *Wives must be subject to their own husbands, in every thing*, Eph. 5. 24. but he saith not the like for Subjects to Magistrates: The reason whereof I conceive to be this, That Children are for their Parents, and Servants for their Masters; but now Subjects are not for Princes, but Princes for their Subjects, *i. e.* for their benefit and advantage; and therefore Subjects are not so strictly bound to Magistrates, as Children are to their Parents, and Servants to their Masters.

Thus having dispatch't these preliminary Discourses concerning *Liberty* and *Indifferency*, we pass on to the *principal* and fundamental point of *Scandal*; where we are to consider the nature of that Scandal for which we must forbear the use of our Liberty in things indifferent. And we shall view it, both as to the *Quid Nominis*, and *Quid Rei*.

1. For the *Quid Nominis*. Much lies in that; neither have I met with any one that gives a full and satisfactory account of it; and therefore I shall be the more large and particular about it.

There

There are two words used in the N. T. translated, *Scandal*, and *Offence*, *σκάνδαλον* (whence our English word comes) and *πρόσκομμα*; the difference between which is but small, if any; and concerning which, Criticks are not agreed upon their *Verdict*; and therefore I must return an *Ignoramus*. Of *πρόσκομμα*, I have spoken before in opening the words of the Text. Now for *σκάνδαλον*,

(a) Yet *κειτικῶς* *ἁλός* *nostras* Gatakerus ὁ *πανυ*, conjectures it to have been of familiar use formerly. In *banc classē (verborum)* *scilicet quorundam quorum usus jam evanuit, nec in veterum scriptis extat amplius, vestigia tamen adhuc residua sunt, ex quibus olim familiaria fuisse, liquido possit deprehendi*), redigi potest τὸ σκάνδαλον; quod apud antiquos *Græca linguæ autores deprehendere hætenus nequiverunt, qui sunt rerum istarum indagatores diligentissimi atque acerrimi. Verum apud Hellenistas, quos nuncupant, crebrum est atque admodum familiare. Gatak. Adversar. Miscellan. cap. 41. p. 415.*

'tis a Scripture-word, (a) never used by any profane Author, as *H. Stevens* observes. Criticks say it signifies properly the *bridge in a trap*, which when a Mouse or other Vermine touches, the trap falls, and so they are taken. And indeed so *σκανδάλισθαι* (a word very near of kin to it) is used by *Aristoph.* in *Acharn.* *σκανδάλισθαι ἰσὰς ἐπ' αὐτῶν*, *thou hast set a trap or snare of words*; and thence 'tis used to signify any kind of snare in general, whether proper or metaphorical; or omne id quod exitii causam præbet, *saith Grotius*; *whatsoever tends to the hurt or ruine of another, or whereby he is drawn into sin, as a bird into*



into a snare. Others will have it to signifie primarily any thing that makes a man to halt (from *συνίζω*, *claudico*) or to go lame; and thence, any thing that occasions a man to sin: And, so, if there be any difference between *πρόσκομμα* and *σκάνδαλον*, 'tis this: the former signifies, that which makes a man stumble; the latter, that which makes him halt; a common effect of stumbling: It is rendred, *A thing that doth offend*, Mat. 13. 41. *they shall gather out of his kingdom, πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα*, all things that offend. *An occasion to fall*, Rom. 14. 13.—*that no man put—an occasion to fall in his Brothers way*. *An occasion of stumbling*, 1 John 2. 10.—*there's none occasion of stumbling in him*. *A stumbling-block*, Rev. 2. 14.—*who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel*. But commonly, *An offence*, as in many places.

It's taken by a Metonymy of the adjunct for persons guilty of scandalous sins, Mat. 13. 41. (2) —all things that offend, and them which work iniquity, i. e. all kind of sinners, both open and secret, scandalous and hypocritical.

(2) *Omnia scandala*, i. e. omnes illos, qui—*Ecclesia permixti, scandalo aliis fuerint, falsâ doctrinâ, aut impurâ vitâ, aliis cadendi, impingendi sive peccandi præbuerint occasionem* Luc. Brug. in loc.

In the Metaphorical acceptation, as applied to spiritual things, it's most frequently taken in the notion of Sin. When occasion is either given, or taken of sin, either of Omission or Commission.

For

For occasion given of committing sin, *Mat.* 18. 7. *We to the world, because of offences.* *Luk.* 17. 1. *It's impossible but that offences will come.* *Rom.* 14. 13. --that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way: and 16. 17. *mark them which cause divisions and offences.* *Rev.* 2. 14. *Balaam taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* *Rom.* 14. 21. *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended.* *1 Cor.* 8. 13. *If meat make my brother to offend.*

For occasion taken of committing sin, *Mat.* 5. 27, 30. *If thy right eye, or hand offend thee, i. e. If thou findest thy self ensnared by the use of lawful things, thou must carefully forbear them.* *Rom.* 11. 9. (a)

(a) *All these comforts shall serve to harden their hearts in sin, and lengthen their life therein, till they fill up the measure of their iniquities.* *Dicson on Pl.* 69. 22. *Let the table be a snare, and trap, and stumbling-block unto them, i. e. let them take occasion by the blessings God bestows upon them, to sin against him, and provoke him to their*

*destruction.* *2 Cor.* 11. 29. *Who is offended, and I burn not? i. e. Who is there that takes occasion of sinning against God, and I am not affected therewith, troubled thereat?*

Again in reference to neglect of Duty, or sins of Omission, I find it once used for occasion given (though not taken) of such sin, *Mat.*

16. 23. *Thou art an offence to me, i. e. Thou goest about, as much as in thee lies, to hinder me from the great work of Redemption, to be accomplished by my sufferings. Hic scandalum sumitur late, scilicet Aquinas, i. e. impedimentum ne pateretur. 222. 2. 5. q. 43.*

But frequently 'tis used for occasion taken (when none was given) of neglect of duty.

*Mat. 11. 6. Blessed is he who is not (a) offended in me, i. e. is not hindered from believing, nor moved to apostatize by any thing he sees in me: and Mal. 13.*

(a) *Qui nullā re, quæ in me sit, absterretur, ac ceu repellitur, quominus in me credat. Luc. Brug. in loc.*

21 (*Mar. 4. 19.*) by and by he is offended, i. e. (b) turned out of the way of duty:

(b) *Timore persecutionum resistit à fide. Idem.*

and v. 57. (*Mark 6. 3.*) and they (his Countrymen) were offended in (or, at) him; i. e. took occasion to disbelieve and disrespect him: and c. 15. 12. *Knowest thou not that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying, i. e. took occasion hereby (being resolved to maintain their own opinions) to be more averse both to thy Person, and the Doctrine thou teachest: and c. 24. 10. many shall be offended, i. e. deserent fidem in me, timore mortis & tribulationis, odiique vitandi causâ, & fient ex fratribus hostes. Luc. Brug. in loc. and c. 25. 31. (Mark 14. 27.) all ye shall be offended because of me, i. e. shall take occasion by that which befalls me to forsake me through*

through unbelief, *John 16.31,32.* so *John 16.1.* *These things have I spoken that you should not be offended.* i. e. I have forewarn'd you of the troubles you are like to meet withall, that you should not be startled thereby, nor discouraged from constancy in your profession. Thus for the use of it in the notion of *sin* (which is the most common).

Again, it's used for an occasion of *censuring*, or thinking ill of us as transgressors of God's Law. So it's taken (according to the general current of Interpreters), *Mat. 17.27.* *Nevertheless lest we should offend them,* i. e. (as I said) administer occasion to them of censuring us as Contemners of God's Law, or the Magistrate's Authority. However this is plainly intimated, that such an evil doth many times accompany Scandal, as in the Context, *1 Cor. 10.30.* *Why am I evil spoken of for that, for which I give thanks?* And *v.29.* he speaks of judging, or censuring, *Why is my liberty judged of another mans conscience?* i. e. Why do I needlessly and unseasonably expose my Christian Liberty to the rash censures of a weak Brother, who may be ready to traduce it, as profane licentiousness? And likewise elsewhere we read of *blame* attending it, *2 Cor. 6.3.* *Giving no offence--that the Ministry be not blamed.*

There's another sense of the word [*offence* and *offend*] usual in our language, viz. for *matter of anger* or *displeasure*: As when one  
is

is angry with us, or takes exceptions at any thing, or takes any thing ill from us ; we say, *He is offended*. But I meet not with any Interpreters that own this sense in any place of the New Testament. Though I must needs say, there are two or three places (were I not bias'd by the current of Interpreters, and that I dare not venture to swim against the stream) would otherwise seem to me very much to encline to this sense. I shall lay them before you, and leave them to your consideration. *Mat. 16. 23. Thou art an offence to me*. Methinks it might very fairly and naturally be paraphrased thus : Thou dost trouble me to see how ignorant thou art of the great work of Redemption by my death and sufferings. I am sorry the Devil should take so much advantage of thy ignorance and weakness, to carry on his own designs by thee. And *c. 17. 27. Nevertheless, lest we should offend them*, i. e. (say I) vex, anger, and displease them by refusing to pay this tribute. And so indeed I have met with one (and that's a modern Author) understands it ; i. e. saith he, *That we may not provoke them to anger or enmity against us*. Again, *c. 15. 12. Knowest thou not that the Pharisees were offended*, i. e. (say I) angry with thee for condemning and slighting their Traditions. But however, whether these places will bear this sense or no, this I am sure of, that the Apostle expresses Scandal by Grief, *Rom 14. 15. If thy brother be*

*Tombs of  
Scand. p.  
12.*

grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Grieved, i. e. by seeing thee do that which he thinks unlawful. So *P. Martyr*. *Quum videant alios secus facere, quam ipsi iudicent esse faciendum.* Or by thinking he is slighted, and made no reckoning of. So *Justinian*. *Sive quod putet legem Dei violari, sive quod putet negligi se, & pro nihilo haberi.* And so the *Dutch Annotators*. When he sees thee who art strong eat meat forbidden in the Old Testament, thinking that therein thou sinnest against God, which grieves the godly; Or seeing that thereby thou dost, as it were despise and contemn him. And this sense of Scandal seems further to be countenanced by *Jobn 6. 60, 61.* compared: *vers. 60. This is an hard saying. v. 61. Doth this offend you? i. e. Are you distasted at this Doctrine? Will it not down with you? Doth it not relish with you, nor please your palate? Can you not digest it? Doth it stick in your stomach? Although, I must confess, it may as fairly be understood in that sense before given of several places, thus: Doth this give you occasion to think hardly and strangely of any of the mysteries I have delivered unto you, or tempt you to forsake and lay down your profession of my Doctrine? There's one place more to which this notion of the word seems not altogether impertinent, *Mat. 18. 6. (Mar. 9. 42.) Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, &c. Offend, i. e. by not receiving (for so it's opposed**



posed to receive, in the former verse), and to grieve, and discourage him. But this sense is so doubtful and obscure, that I find learned men do wholly wave and disown it in the consideration of Scandal. So Dr. Hammond. *To be angry, grieved, troubled at any action of another, is not [to be offended] in the same sense; nor consequently does it follow that I have done amiss in doing that which another may be angry at, unless mine action be in itself evil.* Of Scand. p. 23. Dr. Fer. Taylor. *He only gives Scandal, who induces his Brother, directly or collaterally, into sin, as appears by all the Discourses in Scripture guiding us in this duty.* Life of Christ, Part 3. Disc. 16. sect. 5. Edit. in 4to. And another. *Scandal or offence is not the grieving or displeasing my Brother; for peradventure when I grieve him or displease him, I do edifie him. Now Edification and Scandal are not comparable.* Engl. Pop. Cerem. part 2. c. 8. sect. 2. So that I dare not vouch the use of the word [Scandal] in the notion of grief or displeasure in any place of Scripture, except in that of Rom. 14. 15. Where it seems rather to be mentioned as an adjunct or companion of Scandal, than the *formalis ratio*; or that wherein properly it does consist. I have been the more large and particular in this, because I apprehend an exact consideration of the propriety and use of the word in Scripture will much conduce to the more full and clear handling this point, and be of special use in our following discourse.

And the sum of all is this ; That the word [Scandal] or [Offence] in Scripture is most usually taken for occasion of sin ; sometimes for occasion of censuring or judging the person scandalizing as loose and licentious, and one that walks not strictly according to the Rule of the Gospel ; which may be attended with grief of heart and trouble of spirit for that sin, which the party offended conceives is committed against God.

Thus much for the *Quid Nominis*. The *Quid Rei* follows.

The nature of Scandal in general, may be thus expressed,

*A Scandal is a word, or action, or omission of either, manifest to another, which occasions his fall into sin or sorrow. If this word or action, or omission, be a duty or any thing necessary pro hic & nunc, 'tis Scandal only taken, and not given ; if it be any thing evil, 'tis Scandal given, whether it be taken or no ; that alters not the case : but if it be indifferent, 'tis only given, when it is taken. So then, to the business in hand.*

*Scandal in indifferencies is, an unnecessary word, or action, or omission of either, manifest to another, whereby I know any one is scandalized, i. e. doth take occasion either, to sin himself, or to be grieved at the supposed sin of another.*

*I shall open every branch distinctly by it self.*

1. It is a word] There are scandalous words, as well as actions. An offence may be both given and taken at words, as well as deeds.

Hence (a) Aquinas inserts

*dictum*, as well as *factum* in-

to his definition of a Scan-

dal. Thus the Pharisees

took offence at Christ's

words, Matth. 15. 12. And

Peter's speech was an of-

fence to Christ, Mat. 16. 22, 23.

(a) *Scandalum est dictum*

*vel factum minus rectum,*

*præbens alteri occasionem*

*ruinæ. 22æ. q. 43. 21. and*

so others.

2. --or action] As to eat Idolothyes in the Idols Temple, Rev. 2. 14. Balaam taught Ba-

laam to cast a stumbling-block before the children

of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto Idols, and

to commit fornication: This was a Scandal given,

whether it were taken or no. To preach Christ

crucified, which was to the Jews a stumbling-

block, 1 Cor. 1. 23. this was Scandal taken,

but not given. To eat Idolothyes in private

houses, 1 Cor. 8. 13. If meat make my Brother

to offend; This was Scandal given, if it were

taken, but otherwise it was no Scandal at

all.

3. --or omission of either] Men may be

scandalized at the omission of that which they

look upon to be a duty, as well as at the com-

mission of that which they conceive to be a

sin. Hence Christ to avoid scandal, pays tri-

bute, Mat. 17. 27. Nevertheless lest we should

offend them, &c. implying, that the omission

thereof might prove scandalous. So the Jews

were offended at Paul's omission of the Ceremonial Law, Act. 21. 21, 24.

4. All this must be unnecessary.] An unnecessary speaking, doing, or omitting; or, speaking, doing, or omitting that which is not necessary, or, which is indifferent. And this makes the difference between Scandal given, and Scandal taken, and makes the speaking, doing, or omitting to be culpable; for if my speaking, doing, or omitting be a duty, or necessary, then I am not culpable, though scandal follows upon it; but if it be not necessary, then I am. So that this is the hinge upon which this business of Scandal turns, and the touchstone by which we must try whether we be culpable, or no. And indeed here is the main difficulty; for every one will grant, That that which is necessary, is not matter of scandal given; or, I am not culpable though scandal follows: but then they differ in assigning the extent of necessities, and in defining what is necessary, what not. The ordinary gloss on Mar. 15. 12. resolves it thus: *Dimittendum est propter scandalum, quicquid dimitti potest, salva triplici veritate, vite, doctrine, & justitie.* We must forbear in case of scandal, whatsoever may be forborn, with a salvo to the threefold truth, of life, of faith, and of justice. But this resolution may seem to labour with the malady of *obscurum per obscurius*, and therefore we will dismiss it. Gregory saith, That whatsoever may be forborn without sin, must be for-

forborn in case of Scandal. Judicious and learned *Ames* limits it to that which is (a) necessary by God's

Command; but that seems to straiten it too much; for a thing may be necessary by a concurrence of circumstances, as he himself speaks elsewhere. *Rutherford* in his

(b) *Dispute touching Scandal*, hath several distinctions about things necessary, *qu. 6. p. 61.* and lays down several Rules

for regulating our practice therein, *p. 82.* which I think not necessary here to mention. I think we may dispatch the business, and solve the principal difficulty by a distinction or two (formerly made use of).

There's a twofold Necessity. *Intrinsic*, imprinted upon the nature of things, and to belonging to the whole kind, as to hear, pray, &c. *Circumstantial*; which is not general, but particular, arising only from some circumstance, which makes it necessary *pro hic & tunc* in such a particular respect; as, to stand in a Pulpit, or some such high place, when I am Preaching, that I may be the better heard; to be uncovered when I am praying in the Congregation in token of reverence; to come to the Church to partake of the publick Ordinances, because that place

(a) *Tum autem scandalum dicitur dari—cum illud quod ex mandato Dei non est nobis necessarium---temere committitur. Medul. l. 2, c. 16. sect. 53.*

(b) Which is annexed to his Divine Right of Church Government.

is ordinarily more fit and convenient than another: to eat meat offer'd to Idols, when no other can be had. Thus *abstaining from blood and things strangled*, is called a *necessary thing* for the *Gentiles*, Act. 15. 28. viz. not *intrinsically* from any general standing Law, but *circumstantially*, and in that particular case, in respect of the Scandal the *Jews* did take at eating of them. Now this kind of necessity admits of a very great latitude; so that whatsoever hath but any tolerable, considerable degree of convenience, whether moral, natural, or civil, comes within the compass of this necessity. But then we must take another distinction along with us.

This *circumstantial necessity* is either *Absolute* or *Comparative*. *Absolute*, when a necessary end cannot be attain'd by other means. So, it's absolutely necessary that but one at once should be speaking in the same Congregation, because the contrary would breed disorder and confusion, destructive of edification; and likewise that he that speaks should speak in a known tongue. *Comparative*, when another means may serve as well, and be as convenient for attaining the end, or at least the end may be attain'd thereby in some tolerable manner, though it may be not so readily and conveniently. Thus a Cloak may be as fitting and decent to Preach in as a Gown; a Divinity-School, or some such like place, as convenient as a Church; a high Pew, as a  
Pulpit.

3 Cor. 14.  
28-33.



Pulpit. Now to apply these distinctions to our present purpose, I lay down these Positions.

1. *That which is necessary either intrinsically or circumstantially with an absolute necessity, is not matter of scandal given; i. e. if scandal do follow upon the doing of it, he is not culpable that does it.* In case one of the Christian *Corinthians* could have gotten no other meat, but such as had been offer'd to Idols, and must either have eaten that or starved; the eating of this meat being absolutely necessary in this case for the preservation of his life, and there being no other means in his power for the attaining this necessary end, that would have excused him, and rendered him innocent and blameless, though Scandal had followed upon it: but in case other meat might conveniently have been gotten, and he might have eaten that, then the eating of this particular meat in case of Scandal ought to have been forborn. So Christ's Doctrine concerning the vain Traditions of the Elders being necessary to be delivered, and that the people should be acquainted therewith, excused him from blame, though the Pharisees were offended thereat, and makes him regardless of their scandal: and therefore he saith concerning it, *Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind, v. 14.* So, Churches being so necessary for the decent and orderly meeting of the  
Con-

Congregation, and fitted for the several performances, and in few places there being any other buildings that have any tolerable degree of convenience; and because if these individual Churches should be pulled down, there would not be others built in their rooms; therefore (though some have been scandalized at the use of them in regard they have formerly been abused with Idolatry) it is not matter of scandal given, nor does make us culpable by using them.

2. That which has no degree of necessity, neither in its own nature, nor by reason of any circumstance, or if it have, it is but a comparative necessity, which may be compassed and attained by other means; must be forborn in case of scandal. This is such a legible truth, and so palpably evident, that Papists themselves subscribe to it; for both \* Cajetan and Domin. Bannes say, that we should abstain even *a spiritualibus non-necessariis*, when scandal arises out of them; and Maldona in *Mat. 17. 27.* tells us that Christ shunned a Scandal, which would have been merely passive; the reason whereof is rendred by Paræus (*in locum*). *Debebant enim exatores non ignorare Christi immunitatem & dignitatem; quia tamen ignari ejus erant, ne videretur scandalum dedisse, cedere potius sua libertate voluit. Ideo non dicit tantum [ne scandalizentur] sed [ne scandalizemus eos] i. e. ne scandali materiam iis demus; docens scandala cavenda esse, etiam cum cessione nostri juris in rebus*

\*Comment.  
in 22<sup>a</sup>. q.  
43. a. 7.

*bus medijs.* Hence, wearing a Surplice being scandalous, and officiating in some other garment, being as decent, and every way tending as much to the gravity and solemnity of the Administration, therefore it ought to be forborn, where there is no more necessity for the using, than for the forbearing. So Christ's insisting upon his privilege, and making up of his liberty and freedom in case of paying tribute, not being necessary, he waves it, when he saw scandal might have followed upon it, *Mat. 17. 25-27.*

3. Though the end cannot be altogether so well and conveniently attain'd; yet if it may be at all obtain'd without any considerable degree of inconvenience, in case the other (though more convenient) means, prove scandalous, it renders culpable by the use of it: Or more plainly thus. We are bound to part with some conveniences (especially in civil matters) for the avoiding offence. This I gather both from Paul's Resolution, *1 Cor. 8. ult. If meat make my brother to offend, &c.* Though possibly it might be inconvenient for him, and prejudicial to his health totally to forbear the use of flesh, yet he resolves upon a total abstinence to his dying day, rather than do that which should be offensive to his brother. I know indeed Calvin looks upon this speech as hyperbolic, and makes the plain meaning to be only this, *Se nunquam potius usum suæ libertate, quam ut sit infirmis offendiculo;* and others li-  
mit

mit it to the subject-matter spoken of, viz. flesh offer'd to Idols (which sense I confess is not improbable), yet however the general terms and expressions he uses, do countenance that Position for which I produced this Text. And so I find *Justinian* expressly interpreting it, *Non de Idolothytis tantum loquitur Apostolus, sed etiam de quovis ciborum genere, quamvis carnes potissimum nominet, quod hactenus de Idolothytis locutus sit--in specie genus ipsum intelligit, quomodo apertissime explicant Ieronymiani Commentarii.* And so *Paræus*. *Quæstio tantum erat de carnibus immolatis, eam verò extendit ad carnes in univèrsum, quarum usus absque controversiâ est licitus.* Besides, it's agreeable to his Thesis, which he lays down in as general terms, *Rom. 14. 21. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.* This Position may be also further confirmed by the instance concerning the Brazen Serpent. The Brazen Serpent was preserved for a Memorial of that miraculous deliverance vouchsafed to the *Israelites* in the Wilderness from the stinging of the fiery Serpents. This end, though it might be attain'd by other means, viz. Records, and Scripture, and Information, or Tradition, yet not so clearly and fully (for *seguis irritant, &c.*) yet because it might sufficiently be attain'd otherwise, when the continuance of it proved scandalous, and it became an ob-  
ject

ject and occasion of Idolatry; *Hezekiah* brake it in pieces, calling it *Nebustani*: a piece of Brass: which fact of his is registred by the Holy Ghost among his good deeds, and ranked with oth. r particulars of his destroying Idolatry, 2 *Kings* 18. 4.

But now for the degrees of convenience or inconvenience, which render culpable or excusable, Christian Prudence must determine them by a due weighing of circumstances.

4. As for that necessity which arises from the Command of the Magistrate, it has been spoken to already in the discourse about Indifferency; where we shewed, that so far forth as an indifferent thing is made convenient by circumstances, when it is enjoyed, it becomes necessary: and therefore without any more ado, we now pass on in the Description of Scandal.

5. --manifest unto others.] That which is done secretly without the privity of any other, or which is only inward in the heart and soul, though it may be an offence against God, and sinful, yet is not offensive to men, and scandalous. Hence *Tertullian* defines scandalum by exemplum, something that is exemplary.

6. --whereby I know.] In this kind of Scandal, if it come not to my knowledge, I am not culpable: therefore the Apostle saith, v. 28. If any man say unto thee, &c. q. d. If he acquaints thee with his scruple, then thou art bound

bound to forbear, otherwise not. Thus much also is implied; when he calls scandalizing, a despising or setting at nought a weak Brother, *Rom. 14. 3, 10*. Now I must first take notice of his scruple, before I can be said to neglect, contemn or grieve him by using my liberty notwithstanding his scruple. The reason hereof is, because in this case, Scandal consequent is but *effectus per accidens*: Now however actions done by ignorance of God's Law are sins, yet contingent events not foreseen by us, cannot make those actions of ours, which otherwise are lawful, to become sinful, though the event be harmful, as Mr. Tombes observes, p. 246. As it is in slaying by meer chance, mentioned *Deut. 19. 5*. { such a chance is a grievous misfortune, and in that respect to be lamented, but not a sin, nor to be repented; so such casual scandal is to be bewailed as a mishap, not mourned for as a sin.

7. —any one] The too much officiousness of some hath made a knot here in a Bulrush. Much dust has been raised, and much more ado than needs, made concerning the persons scandalized, as if their qualifications did alter the case, and several limitations are given: as that of *Aquinas*, *Sciendum est scandalum ex malitia (quod Pharisaicum rectè nominatur) vitandi causâ nullam actionem, quæ recta sit, omitti debere; propter alterum verò, quod vel ex imbecillitate vel ignorantia nascitur declinandum,*



*clinandum; omnes quantumcunque rectas aut utiles actiones, quæ ad animi salutem non sint necessariae, declinandas, vel occultandas, vel saltem in aliud tempus differendas esse.* 22x. q. 43. in Axiomat. And that of the Dutch Annotations on the Text. Neither Christians, nor Heathens, viz. if they be such persons of whom we have hope that thereby they may be gained by us: and Dr. Fer. Taylor. We must not, to please peevish or froward people, betray our liberty which Christ has given us. But notwithstanding all this, upon due examination it will be found, that it's all one who they be that are scandalized, and that the qualification of the person has no influence at all into the business, so as to make *Pro* or *Con*, to alter it one way or other; but that we must look altogether at the matter of the scandal, and nothing at all at the person scandalized. We must not consider what moves them, whether ignorance or malice, but what occasions it in our selves: for if it be a necessary duty, we must not forbear for the weak; if unnecessary, we must forbear even for the wicked. This is most evident by the Apostle's enumeration in the Text: he makes no distinction, but includes all in the prohibition; both *Jews*, *Gentiles*, and *Christians*; and his *Practice* was answerable to his *Precept*, 1 Cor. 9. 19—22. & c. 10. v. 33. Although it's true, Because weak persons are most apt to be scandalized, therefore we must be the most tender and

Life of  
Christ,  
part 3. p.  
57. Edit.  
in 4to.

and careful of them (and therefore the Commination of our Saviour Christ is especially levell'd against offending them, Luke 17. 2. *It were better for him that a Mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the Sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones*). Yet we must as well avoid what scandalizes the wicked, as the weak ; as we must no more defraud a rich man than a poor one ; nor wound a strong man, than a weak one, or a child ; though we may more carefully avoid one than the other, because they are less able to help and relieve themselves.

8. ---doth take] not may, but doth. This is one difference between things that are scandalous per se, and in their own natures, viz. which either are absolutely unlawful, or at least have a real appearance of evil, and scandal in these indifferencles, that in the former it's enough *quod de sui ratione habent quod sint inductiva ad peccandum*, as Aquinas speaks. The possibility of Scandal subsequent does aggravate their evil and sinfulness, though scandal does not actually follow ; as we see in that of Christ to Peter, *Mat. 16. 23. Thou art an offence to me*. He does not say [I am offended with thee], but [Thou art an offence]. He checks him for laying a stumbling-block in his way ; though he could not, was not capable of being offended and stumbling at it, yet this did not excuse him. His sin was never the less, but every whit as great, as if the

212. q. 43.

2. 1.

the effect had followed : But now in these Indifferencies, it is only *actual scandal* following thereon that renders a man culpable : and therefore I am not bound to forbear such an action, except I know that it *doth* give offence. }

9. --*occasion.* ] The *word*, or *action*, or *omission* of one man can but *occasion*, or be an *imperfect cause*, or *cause by accident* of the sin of another ; for nothing is properly the cause of a man's sin, but his own will. Thus *Aquinas*, *Nilil potest esse homini sufficiens causa peccati,--nisi propria voluntas,--Et propter hoc non dicitur, dans [causam] ruina, sed dans [occasionem.]* 22æ. q 43. a. 1.

10. --*either to sin himself.* ] This seems to me to be that wherein the formality, or, at least, the principal notion of Scandal in things indifferent doth consist, and which mostly, if not *only*, renders culpable, when as another takes occasion thereby to sin : For,

(1) The Scripture-use and acceptation of the word runs generally in this channel (as was shew'd before), and those effects attributed to it by the Apostle imply no less ; as, *wounding their weak conscience*, 1 Cor. 8. 12. i. e. not only with a *natural wound*, by grief, but a *moral, spiritual wound*, by sin. *Verberatur alterius conscientia*, saith P. Martyr in loc. *quando male edificatur, & ad ea impellitur agenda, de quibus aliter sentit*, which is a sin, Rom. 14. 23. and *destroying*, Rom. 14. 20. or, *cau-*

ing to perish, 1 Cor. 8. 11. viz. morally too, by inducing into sin, which is the ruine and undoing of the soul.

(2) In this also agree all Divines that I have met with, both ancient and modern. *Tertullian*---adificans ad delictum. *Aquin*---præbens occasionem ruinae. *Spiritualis*, &c. (222. q. 43. a. 1.) quæ est peccatum, as himself explains it, (a. 2.) ---quod aliis spirituales perniciem affert, *Amesl. Medul.* l. 2. c. 16. sect. 53. ---quo alii possint vel excitari ad peccandum, vel impediri aut retardari à benefaciendo, id. sect. 44. ---quo impeditur Evangelii cursus, *P. Martyr* in 1 Cor. 8. 8. ---quo alius deterior redditur, *Polan. Synt.* ---quo aliquis possit à pietate & salute vel revocari vel impediri, *Lucas*. which is or may be the occasion of another man's halting, or falling into sin, or swerving from the straight way of righteousness, *Gillesp.* He only gives scandal, who induces his Brother directly or collaterally into sin, *Dr. Jer. Tail.*

222. q. 43.  
2. 2.

(3) Because to be scandalized is sinful. So *Aquin.* Scandalum passivum semper est peccatum in eo qui scandalizatur; non enim scandalizatur nisi in quantum aliquantulum ruit spirituali ruinâ, quæ est peccatum.

Now the particular sin, which Scandal in things indifferent does occasion, is ordinarily one of these two, with their concomitants and consequents, viz. Either,

(1) A like speech, action or omission, but with a condemning, or at least with a doubting conscience. Every example does animate and en-

encourage him that observes it, to do the like. *The eye affects the heart*, saith *Jeremy*, Lam. 3. 51. But if he that is scandalized either think it unlawful, or be not satisfied of its lawfulness, and yet takes example by the other, he falls into sin. This the Apostle calls, being *made weak*, (Rom. 14. 21.) i. e. apt to fall, brought into danger of sin. This was the case Rom. 14. It was, before the plenary promulgation of the Gospel, and destruction of the Temple, lawful to observe Jewish Festivals and distinction of meats, and yet *not necessary*, but *indifferent*, (v. 14. *I know and am persuaded that nothing is unclean of it self*), because Christ was come in the flesh: yet many of the New-Convert-Christians were not so fully acquainted with, and satisfied about their Liberty in these things, but did still esteem one day above another (v. 5.) and some meats unclean, (v. 14.) and consequently did condemn, or at least scruple the non-observation of those days, and the eating of those meats: Now such by seeing others, which were *higher Scholars* perhaps in Christ's School than themselves, to neglect those days, and that distinction of meats, were apt to be drawn to act against their own consciences and judgments, which was a great sin; for every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind, (v. 5.) but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean, (v. 14.) and therefore such an one is damned, or condemned by his own

conscience, if he eat, (v. 23.) which was scandalizing, and a heinous sin in those that did occasion it. Neither was the case much unlike among the Christian *Corinthians*. It was lawful to eat any meat *bought in the shambles*, or set before them at *their neighbours table*, 1 Cor. 10. 25, 27. yet sometimes some might be scandalized thereby, which was when they did not think it lawful, yet by another's example were emboldened to eat, as the Apostle speaks, c. 8. v. 10.

(2) The other sin which the use of Liberty in things indifferent does occasion, is *Censuring such a word, action or omission, as unlawful, and the person as licentious*, which because there is no ground for in the nature of the thing, (it being, as I said, indifferent) it is the sin of *rash judging*; condemned by Christ, *Mat. 7. 1*. That this is one way whereby the person scandalized may fall, is evident by the Apostle's words, 1 Cor. 10. 29. *Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?* q. d. I do culpably scandalize another by doing { such a thing, that I have (otherwise) liberty to do, or not to do, if another judges or censures me for it: *sq. v. 30. For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?* i. e. though I may lawfully and comfortably make use of my liberty; yet if another take occasion to reproach or condemn me for it, I do ill therein; I ought not to do it. And *Rom. 14. 16.*

*Let*



*Let not your good be evil spoken of.* Thus we use to say, There is a scandal lies upon such a man, for such a thing, *i. e.* he is evil spoken of for it; he is censured and condemned for it, as a loose and ungodly person; or at least, as one that does amiss in that particular. The case is the same if *Religion be evil spoken of*, or scandalized by reason of any unnecessary word, action, or omission of ours, then we are guilty of scandalizing, or, *the sin of scandal.*

11. Lastly, ---or to sorrow, or be grieved at the supposed sin of another.] There is one place, as I said before, and but one, that clearly brings this within the compass of Scandal, *viz.* Rom. 14. 15. *But if thy Brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably; Grieved, viz.* because he conceives that thereby thou sinnest against God: which kind of grief and trouble is frequently found in godly persons upon such occasions. *Psal.* 119. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.* V. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.* V. 158. *I beheld the transgressors and was grieved.* *Psal.* 139. 21. -- *Am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee?* Now this renders the person culpable who doth so grieve or scandalize another, and therefore must be avoided. For, as we must not grieve the Spirit of God in our own hearts, *Eph.* 4. 30. so neither in the hearts

of any of his people, our brethren and fellow-members of the same mystical body with our selves. God does not willingly do so himself, *Lam. 3. 33. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*; nor would he have us to do so. *Ezek. 13. 22. Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, &c.* And this is the only kind of trouble, offence or displeasure that is considerable in the point of Scandal, so as to render culpable, *viz. that which is caused with respect to God and his glory*; as for that which arises upon any other account, as, from any personal concernment, because my command is disobeyed, my opinion contradicted, my will not taken for a law, or the like, it is not at all considerable in the point of Scandal, and will not come within the verge of the Scripture-notion thereof, for scandalizing is destroying; but such a displeasing may tend to Edification; and therefore is not scandalizing.

Thus we have at length run through the Explication of every branch and particular in the definition of Scandal; from whence we may observe, that there are these three things considerable (though differently) in it.

(1) In respect of the *person offended*, there is an *evil example* in that which he conceives to be unlawful and sinful, which naturally prompts him to the like.

(2) In

(2) In respect of the person scandalizing, he lies under *blame and censure* for doing that which the other conceives unlawful.

(3) If the person scandalized be *Godly*, and one who is tender of God's Honour, then he is grieved for the wrong he conceives is done to God, and the offence against him, and the reproach that redounds to Religion by that which he looks upon as sinful. Each of which is proportionably culpable (and therefore more or less carefully to be avoided) according to the rank I have set them in. The first, most; the second, next; the last, least. We have at last climbed the Tree; let's now see what *fruit* it bears (for we shall not trouble you with Reasons: you may find enow in *Rom. 14.* and in other Authors).

Much useful fruit grows upon this subject, which I shall gather for you, and lay before you.

*Use 1.* Is *Scandal* such a thing, as has been described? Then, let me hence in the first place take occasion to offer a word of advice and direction to you, and lay down some Rules (which indeed are little other than Inferences from what has been said) for the better informing your judgements, and governing your practice in this ticklish affair of Scandal.

Non est  
cessandum  
ab operibus  
bonis pro  
quocunque  
scandalo.

Aug. Ep.  
199.

Calv. In-  
stit. l. 3. c.  
19. sect.  
13.

I. No man is bound to forbear a necessary duty, by reason of scandal following thereon; for they are (at most) but indifferencies that must be forborn for Scandal's sake. We must use all lawful means to prevent sin in our Brother; but as we must not do evil that good may come of it; so neither must we neglect good, for fear of evil coming on it; and so run in to sin our selves, to stop another from it. We must not transgress duty, to express charity; be uncharitable to our selves, to shew it to others. It was the saying of a Heathen (*Pericles*, mentioned by *Plutarch*) *Δεῖ τοῖς φίλοις συμπεράττειν, ἀλλὰ μίχρην βωμῶν.* A friend must accommodate and help his friend as far as the Altar, i. e. as far as he can go with a good conscience, without intrenching upon Religion. And this the most judicious *Calvin* expresses excellently, *Quæ necessaria sunt factu*, saith he, *nullius offendiculi timore omit- tenda sunt. Quemadmodum enim charitati subji- cienda est nostra libertas, ita sub fidei puritate subsidere vicissim ipsa charitas debet. Equidem & hic Charitatis rationem haberi decet, sed Usque ad aras, i. e. ne in gratiam proximi Deum offenda- mus.* i. e. Those things which are necessary must not be omitted for fear of scandal: for as our Liberty must give place unto Charity, so Charity it self must give way unto Purity; so that though we must have respect unto Charity, yet only so far forth as we may do it, without offending God. To which agrees that of *Austin*, *Præstat ut scan- dalum*

*dalum admittatur, quam veritas deferatur.* It's better to admit of scandal, than forsake the truth; which Bishop Andrews expresses thus: *Hoc tenendum Utilius nasci scandalum, quam deferi verum.* The Reason whereof is partly that which Aquinas gives, *Secundum ordinem Charitatis, plus debet homo suam salutem spiritualem diligere quam alterius.* A well-order'd Charity begins ever at home, making a man chiefly desire and endeavour the salvation of his own soul; and consequently more solicitous to avoid sin in himself, than to prevent it in another; and partly, because This were to foster and nourish a principle of evil in the person for whose sake we neglect our duty: for as Tertullian observes, *Bonæ res neminem scandalizant nisi malam mentem.* As the light of the Sun hurts not a sound eye, but a sore one; so, necessary duties offend not a good heart, but a bad one. To which we may also add, as another reason, that of Dr. Fer. Tailor. *It is pusillanimity, or hypocrisie, or denying of Christ before men, to comply with any man, and to offend God, or omit a duty. Whatsoever is necessary to be done, and is made so by God, no weakness nor peevishness of man can make necessary not to be done. For the matter of scandal, is a duty beneath the prime obligations of Religion.* But though we may not omit a necessary duty, for the avoiding of Scandal, yet it is generally granted that some duties may be omitted, viz. such wherein we have to do with

Aquinas.

Sum. 2.2.2.

q. 43. a. 7.

Life of  
Christ,  
part 3.  
disc. 16.  
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with others; as reproving miscarriages, and punishing offenders; according to that Rule, *Pro vitando scandalo, cessat rigor disciplina*; not such wherein our selves only are concern'd; as praying, hearing, &c. And yet those must not be generally omitted neither, so as to induce an universal non-obeying such affirmative Precepts, but only *pro hic & nunc*, when we foresee, that upon the doing thereof the weak and ignorant will commit great sins. *Præcepta affirmativa juris naturalis aliquando propter scandalum sunt dimittenda, — quia præcepta affirmativa obligant quando & quomodo oportet.* Bannes tom. 3. m. 22. q. 43. art. 8. concl. 2. See *Ruth.* of Scand. p. 18. and *Feanes Schol.* and *Pract. Divin.* part 2. p. 106.

2. *Scandal by doing things, is more ordinary, than by forbearing them.* Where we meet with one instance in Scripture or Experience of the latter, we may observe several of the former sort. For, *Actions* are more observable and apparent, than *Omissions*. As, in point of Law, a *Negative* cannot be proved; so here, *Omissions* cannot be so readily discerned and discovered; and therefore Examples in such cases are not so influential and attractive, as in case of positive practice. Besides, there may be so many reasons for the forbearing of an action, that scarce any one who has but so much discretion as will serve him for his every-days-wearing, will think much at it: whereas, positive practice, or actions,



actions, that they may be good, must be attended with such a numerous train of regular circumstances (*bonum est ex integris causis*) that it's a hard matter so to rank and dispose and govern them, but some or other will be picking holes in their coats, and finding faults, and taking occasion to censure them, or us for them.

3. *In things indifferent that may be scandalous at one time, or in one place, which is not so at or in another* : for since this kind of scandal does not arise necessarily, or naturally from the action, but only from the apprehension of the observer, and so *recipitur ad modum recipientis*, therefore one may be scandalized, and not another ; or the same person at one time, and not at another. Now because all Scandal arises from some appearance of evil, either real or imaginary, therefore I distinguish of a twofold appearance of evil, *Natural*, which is an occasion of sin, as lying in the same bed with another man's wife ; or else a sign of sin, as keeping ill company : and *Customary*, when a thing is commonly abused to evil, and is usually a sign of evil ; as going to Play-houses is commonly abused to evil, and used by none almost but loose, debauch't persons. Now what has an appearance of evil only by reason of Custom, and being used only by those that are evil, if in process of time, the custom alters, and it comes to be used promiscuously by all sorts, both

both good and bad, then the appearance of evil is removed, and it ceases to be scandalous. *E. g.* Taking Tobacco, at the first use of it amongst us, was scandalous, because practised by few, but such as were of the more ranting strain: but afterwards, when it came to be more generally made use of, then Custom took away the Scandal of it. The case is the same in point of Place, as well as Time. That which in some places carries a shew of evil, as wearing a hood and tippet in a Country Church, elsewhere perhaps is not suspected thereof; as wearing the same habiliments in the University. So *Timothy's* Circumcision was scandalous among the *Gentiles*, not among the *Jews*; and on the contrary, Uncircumcision was scandalous among the *Jews*, not among the *Gentiles*. Hence that advice of *Ambrose* to *Austin* and *Monica*, which was respected by *Austin* as an answer of a heavenly Oracle. *Unto whatsoever Church ye shall come, observe the manner or custom thereof, if ye will neither give nor take offence*, Ep. 86. Which being restrain'd unto things indifferent, may be very good.

And here I conceive, regard is to be had especially to those upon that Place, which is the scene of the action, and not so much to those reports which are raised concerning it: therefore *Paul*, when he was among the *Gentiles*, would not have them circumcised, though the report thereof scandalized the *Jews*

*Jews at Jerusalem, Act. 21. 21.* And so you shall find, that the Apostles always had respect to the places where they were present, so as to do, or not to do, as the exigence of that place required.

4. *An action from whence scandal follows, may at first be innocent and blameless, and yet afterwards become culpable and guilty, viz.* if it be continued after the scandal is known to follow from it. Thus the Preservation of *Gideon's Ephod*, and the *Brazen Serpent*, was neither evil, nor had any appearance of evil, (they being Monuments of God's mercies) so that when the people were first scandalized by them, the scandal was meerly passive; but the keeping and retaining of them, after it was known that scandal rose out of them, was culpable (not being necessary) and made the scandal to become active also.

5. *Whatsoever must be forborn for the scandal of the weak, must also be forborn for the scandal of the wicked and malicious.* All readily acknowledge that the weak are not to be scandalized; all the doubt is concerning the malicious, or the *scandalum Phariseorum*, whether that be culpable, and to be avoided. The Affirmative I prove by these Arguments.

(1) The Apostles prohibition in the Text is general, *Give none offence*; and the particulars he enumerates include all persons in the world, *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or *Christians*. Now both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were oft-times  
very

very malicious against the *Christians*, as we find by many passages in the *History of the Acts*; and yet even they must not be scandalized.

*Mat. 5. 44.*

(2) We are bound to love even our greatest enemies, and to do good unto all; and therefore we must not prejudice any, though never so wicked and malicious, by scandalizing of them.

(3) Those who are wicked and malicious at present, yet may be of the number of those for whom Christ dyed; and therefore not to be destroyed with thy meat, i. e. scandalized by the use of Indifferencies, *Rom. 14. 15.*

*Of Scand.*  
*p. 20.*

6. Information or rendering a reason is not sufficient to excuse in case of scandal, if scruple in the party scandalized doth still remain. Paul gave strong reasons (as *Rutherford* observes) for the lawfulness of an ordinary and common use of days and meats prohibited to the *Jews*, that so the weak *Jews* might be informed thereof, and not be scandalized at the common use of them; but yet he thought not fit either to make any *Canons* for that purpose, or to practise accordingly, but resolves rather to forbear while the world stands, than to offend by such a use of them, *1 Cor. 8. 13.*

Conformists do endeavour to acquit themselves from the guilt of Scandal by this pretence, among others, That people have been abundantly informed, both by Word and Print, of the lawful use of the Ceremonies, and that therefore, if now they are scandalized,

lized, it's their own fault, and at their own peril. But *this covering is too narrow for them to wrap themselves in.* For,

(1) Suppose the worst that you can, viz. That they are wilfully, frowardly, peevishly, stubbornly ignorant, and refuse instruction, yet the scandal even of such is to be forbore, (as was shewed in the last particular). But,

(2) We may very fairly and probably conjecture, that their ignorance may not be affected, though their scruple still remain; For either it may arise (as *Cajetan* and other Schoolmen in 22<sup>a</sup>. q. 43. a. 7. observe) from the power and prejudice of Custom, either in Practice or Opinion, which may cast such a mist before their eyes, that they cannot discern the strength of the Reasons propounded; or from the nature of the points controverted, which may be too nice (as is usual in these cases) for ordinary capacities to comprehend and fathom

the depth of (whatsoever \*  
Mr. Tombes suggest to the  
contrary), and therefore  
may be free from any con-  
siderable (if not from all)  
tincture of those odious ag-  
gravations he there loads

they may understand the other; if they understand neither,  
they may be termed more rightly Infidels, than weak in faith;  
blind, than dim-sighted. Tombes of Scand. p. 215.

\* It is not to be imagined, but  
that they who have natural  
parts sufficient to conceive  
the mysteries of faith, have  
natural parts sufficient to con-  
ceive the Doctrine of the Law-  
fulness of Christian Liberty;  
if they can understand the one,

them

them withal: so that *habendi sunt adhuc pr  
pusilli*, as *Ames* saith, *C. C. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 15*  
they are still to be accounted in the number  
of weak ones; and consequently such acti-  
ons, at which they are scandalized, are to be  
forborn; as *Bannes* determines, --- *Tunc quam-  
vis sit illis reddita ratio, tamen ab hujusmodi spi-  
ritualibus cessandum, quia tunc non ex malitiâ,  
sed ex ignorantia scandalizantur.* Tom. 3. m. 22.  
q. 43. art. 8. Yea even those who are strong

\* Those who excel in light, { in Knowledge, may yet be  
may be weak in grace, and { weak \* in Grace, and have  
in hazard to be insnared. { strong inclinations to a sin-  
ful compliance; and in-  
Ruth. of Scand. p. 22. deed it is to be feared, that

many Ministers are more  
prevailed with, by the Examples of others,  
and the outward advantages that Conformity  
brings along with it, than by the strength of  
the Reasons produced for it. Hence Dr. *Taylor's*  
censure [*It is a mantle cast over pride and fro-  
wardness, to think our selves able to teach others,  
and yet pretend offence and scandal*] (which  
seems to be levell'd against Non-conformists,  
and such as scruple the lawfulness of their  
Diana- and Dalila-rites and Ceremonies) will  
prove but a *brutum fulmen*, a meer Squib or  
Pot-gun, and fall to the ground without do-  
ing any Execution; because, as the Learned  
*Rutherford* has well observed, *A stumbling-  
block may be laid before the inclination, no less  
than before the blind mind.* Of Scand. p. 20.

*Taylor's*  
*Life of*  
*Christ,*  
part 3.  
disc. 16.  
sect. 10.  
Edit. in  
4to.

7. Scandal,



7. *Scandal*, in the primary and most proper sense of the word, cannot be given both ways; both by doing and omitting. I say, given; so as that a man should be culpable whether he acts or forbears. Some seem to deny it absolutely; that it is not *casus dabilis*, that scandal should follow both upon doing and forbearing. *Talis perplexitas est absurdum quid*, saith Bannes. Tom. 3. m. 22. q. 43. 4. 8. con. 3. So Ames, *Nulla datur talis perplexitas ut necessarium sit pio homini, siue hoc vel illud faciat, siue non faciat, scandalum alicui dare, C. C. l. 5. c. xi. sect. 18.* On the contrary, others suppose that the case may so fall out, that a man may give Scandal both ways; which they endeavour to prove, both from Paul's circumcising Timothy in compliance with the Jews; and not circumcising Titus, in compliance with the Gentiles; and also from the example of Peter, and his Companions, who were, say they, in danger of a double Scandal, of the Jews, by eating with the Gentiles; and of the Gentiles, by refusing to converse with them. And in this case a man is bound, say they, to avoid the greatest Scandal. Thus the Conformists generally; and therefore when they are urged with the Scandal of the Ceremonies, they reply, That a greater Scandal is given by neglect of them, viz. A scandal to the Magistrate, and to the dutiful and obedient Sons of the Church. See Dr. Fer. Taylor, *Life of Christ*, Part 3. disc. 16. n. 11. Edit. in 4to.

H

Thus

Thus far I think we may accommodate the business between them, That there may some kind of scandal follow on both hands. Conformists themselves cannot deny, Scandal arising from Conformity; and we must yield, That persons many times pretend Scandal by Non-conformity; but then we deny that these Scandals are of the same kind. We deny that the same kind of Scandal follows on both hands, both by doing and forbearing. The Scandal arising from Conformity is drawing others into sin, viz. to do that which they are not satisfied about the lawfulness of, but do doubt that it is unlawful. But the Scandal arising from Non-conformity is only, either being displeased with those persons that will not comply with their judgements, and do as they do; or at most a censuring them to be contentious, factious, peevish, refractory persons; and therefore the scandal arising from Conformity is far greater, and of a more heinous and malignant nature, than that which arises from Non-conformity, and consequently more carefully to be avoided. But then I add further, by way of Reply to the foregoing Cavil. There are weightier and stronger reasons for Non-conformity, than for Conformity; for there is no reason for Conformity (at least which they will stick to) but Authority; Now that is but *argumentum in-artificiale*, and barely of it self without a good foundation, no reason at all. It is but like

like a cipher without a figure : Indeed where a figure goes before, a cipher adds much to it, but of it self it is nothing : So where Reason goes before, Authority strengthens the obligation, and ties the knot hard ; but without Reason, 'tis but a cipher. Reason *edged* with Authority, and Authority *back'd* with Reason } do mutually strengthen each other ; but Authority alone signifies little. But now there are many and weighty arguments for Non-conformity ; as may be seen fully in all their Writings ; which though we should grant to come short of that cogency and demonstrativeness which some urge, yet certainly they carry such probability with them, as far out-strips the best arguments for Conformity. And therefore though they should not prove an absolute unlawfulness in the Ceremonies, yet in this point of Scandal (where reasons on both sides are to be weighed) the scale against Conformity will be far the heavier. So that we may still keep our ground, and safely assert, That Scandal in its proper and primary notion, for inducing into sin, can only arise one way (which is usually by doing) ; and in this sense, I suppose, that passage of *Ames* before quoted, is to be understood. (And therefore Mr. *Tombes's* arguments, p. 266. &c. of his *Treatise of Scandal* are levell'd at a wrong mark).

To the instances alledged by way of proof for a double Scandal, I answer to the former :

That it was lawful for *Paul* to circumcise *Timothy*, because his Mother was a Jewess (*Act. 16. 1.*) to whom the rites of *Moses* were permitted for a while, viz. till the destruction of the Temple ; and therefore, it being lawful to be done, rather than scandalize the *Jews*, among whom he was now to exercise his Ministry, in that case it became necessary to be done : But *Titus* being a *Greek* (*Gal. 2. 3.*) it was not lawful for him to be circumcised, nor for any of the *Gentiles* to observe any of the Positive (which I oppose to Negative) parts of the Ceremonial Law, as Ceremonial ; and therefore though the *Jews* watched what he'd do, yet he absolutely refuses to circumcise him ; not for fear of scandalizing the *Gentiles*, but because it was not lawful to bring the *Gentiles* under the bondage of the Ceremonial Law (which they would have been thereby, *Gal. 5. 2, 3.*) as *Paul* himself gives the reason, *Gal. 2. 4.*

To the other I answer, That his eating with the *Gentiles* was a thing necessary, and that for the avoiding of two great Scandals ; one of the *Gentiles*, who otherwise would have been tempted to *Judaize* ; the other of the *Jews*, who otherwise would have been confirmed in *Judaism*.

8. *The whole business of Scandal, is to be guided and governed by the Rule of Edification. That is the hinge whereupon the door moves, whether to open or shut ; whether to use or forbear. Both Doing and Abstaining must be order'd by this Rule of Edification. This indeed is the great end of*

*all Church-matters : of the Word and Ordinances, that we may grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 2. of the Ministerial Office, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. 4. 12. of Ministerial Power and Authority, tis for Edification, 2 Cor. 10. 8. of Spiritual Gifts, which are for the edifying the Church, 1 Cor. 14. 12. of Christian Society and Communion ; to edifie one another, 1 Thes. 5. 11. And therefore this is that the Apostle still refers to, Rom. 14. 19. Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another. And 15. 2. Let every one of us please his neighbour for good to edification. Indeed the Rule is general, Let all things be done to edifying. 1 Cor. 14. 26. and so must take place in this case. If the use of indifferent things be for Edification, then we must use them, as Paul did Circumcision, to Timothy, Act. 16. 3. for he being to be his companion in his Ministry among the Jews, if he had not been*

*Utendum est libertate nostrâ si in proximi nostri ædificationem cedat ; sin ita proximo non expediat, eâ tunc abstinendum. Calv. Inst. 1. 3. c. 19. sect. 12. Ubique studendum charitati, & spectanda proximi nostri ædificatio. Id. Ibid.*

circumcised, they would have rejected his service, and never have given him the hearing. Or, if on the contrary, not using them be for edification, then we must not use them, but forbear; as the same Apostle did circumcision for Titus, Gal. 2. 3. for if he had done it, then the false Brethren would have drawn an argument from thence for their own opinion, viz. That circumcision (and the observation of others Judaical Ceremonies) was necessary to salvation. And hence, upon this account, if persons are scandalized at an indifferency, and their Scandal arise from some superstitious conceit and persuasion, and such as they have no tolerable pretence or ground of \*

\* *We read not of Scandals culpable in God's word, but there is some apparent moral reason for them. Ruth. of Scand. p. 53.*

reason for; as if any should be offended for eating flesh on a Friday, or eating in a morning before receiving the Sacrament; they are rather to be crossed, than

complied with herein, because that is more like to tend to their edification; and yielding to them would but nourish them up in their superstitious fancy. As Solomon saith concerning a fool (Prov. 26. 4, 5.) *Answer a fool (i. e. a conceited fool) according to his folly, (i. e. smartly, let him not have his way and saying) lest he be wise in his own eyes. But answer not (a tractable) fool, according to his folly, (i. e. weakly) lest thou be like him. So may I say*



say in this case, \* *Comply* not with an *obstinate* person in his *erroneous*, *irrational*, *superstitious* fancies, that thou bolster him not up therein; but yield unto a *weak* Brother, lest thou show thy self as weak as he.

*Obj.* If it be objected, That that compliance which the Scripture enjoyns and gives instances of; as, the *Gentiles* abstaining from things strangled, and blood, &c. *Act.* 15. 29. and *Paul's* purifying himself, *Act.* 21. 24. was in compliance with the *Jews*, and so might

sooth them up in their erroneous opinion, that the Law of *Moses* was still in force; and therefore this is not a sufficient cause to hinder us from complying with them, and make us regardless whether we scandalize them or no; but that for all this we ought rather to comply with them in their fancies, at least in abstinence from, and forbearance of, such things as they disallow:

*Ans.* To this I answer, There is a vast difference between *Ceremonies*, or customs and usages of *Divine Institution* and appointment, and those which are meerly of *humane inven-*

\* *Docuerunt Apostoli in indifferentibus faciendis vel o-mittendis, duo extrema esse cavenda; hinc quidem scandalum infirmorum, inde pervicaciam falsorum fratrum. Si enim usu rerum mediarum videamus vel illos offendi, h. e. in fide labe factari, vel istos in falsâ opinione obfirmari, omittenda potius sunt, quia tunc per accidens fiunt illicitæ. Paræus. Extraneorum nobis est habenda ratio, ne dum eis obsequimur, ipsos in superstitione confirmemus. Beza.*

tion. These mentioned in the Objection, and all other Scripture-instances of this kind relate only to things of Divine appointment, and such as had been necessary Duties, as having been positively and peremptorily enjoined by God. Now though those Ceremonies and Parts of the Mosaical Law, were, after Christ's Death, really *dead*, and without any life and soul, yet they were not as yet *deadly*; but were dispensed with for a time, (*viz.* till the Destruction of the Temple) that in the mean while the converted *Jews* might be thoroughly informed and instructed in their Christian Liberty concerning them; and therefore a compliance with them in such things for a while, was needful, and for their Edification. But the case is far otherwise with us now-a-days: There are no such Ceremonies urged on the one hand, or scrupled on the other, which have any such *Divine stamp* upon them: There is no such rational ground can be pleaded for a submission to these things: They are generally such as have no foundation, but in the superstitious or erroneous fancies of men; and therefore compliance with them would rather feed the ill humour, than any way tend to correct, or evacuate it; and so would hinder their Edification, and consequently ought not to be yielded to.

Lastly, From all, I infer the *unlawfulness of the Ceremonies*; and that upon the account

of all those points which have been the main subject of the preceding discourse, *viz.* both in respect

(1) Of their *Scandalousness*; which though we should suppose they are not in their own *nature*; as not being absolutely evil, yet they are notoriously so in their *Use*, and do render those *Parts of worship* to which they are annexed *nauseous* and *odious* to many queazy stomachs; and make the *offering of the Lord* to be *abhorred*, as *Ely's sons* did, 1 Sam. 2. 17.

(2) Of their *Incroachment* upon, and *Infringement* of *Christian Liberty*; in as much as they are an *unnecessary Determination* of those things, wherein at least we ought to be left free, if we are not bound wholly to abstain from; and then

(3) Upon the account of their (pretended) *indifferency*; which if it really were so, then they are not the fit and proper *matter* of an *Imposition* and *Constitution*, as fully appears by what has been said before; and therefore I only hint these things now, and enlarge not any further on them here.

*Use 2.* By way of *Admonition*, and that,

(1) In general, to All, to walk *circumspectly* and *cautiously*, lest in any thing we offend any person, by any undue, unwarrantable use of our *Liberty*. O take heed of any thing, of every thing which may be an occasion

sion of stumbling to another ! O with what fear and trembling should we walk, lest at any time any offence should come by our means ! How careful should we be, not only not to make pits wherein others should fall and break their bones, but to remove all sticks and stones out of the way, whereat the weakest may stumble and hurt himself ! The Jews were commanded, when they built a new house, to make a Battlement upon the roof of it (*Deut. 22. 8.*) for the safety and security of men's bodies ; and shall we not only not put up Battlements for the preservation of men's souls, but leave the way slippery and full of snares ?

We may observe in nature, that some things are moved contrary to their proper inclinations for the good of the Universe : so must we forbear some things which our particular inclinations would prompt us to, for the good of others, and lest they should be offended and scandalized thereby. This is the express Injunction of the Apostle often repeated, *1 Cor. 10. 24. Let no man seek his own (i. e. only that) but (also) every man anothers wealth ; or, concerns, τὸ τῆς ἑτέρας.* *Rom. 15. 2. Let every one of us please his neighbour.* *Gal. 5. 13. Use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. q. d. Though Christ has made you free from the bondage and thralldom of the Ceremonial Law, and so now you have liberty for the free use of*  
many

many things, which before his people were restrain'd from, yet since this is a priviledge very subject to abuse, and the flesh will be apt to take advantage thereof, for the fulfilling its own lusts, and promoting and carrying on its own designs, desires and interest, therefore you must be very wary and cautious in the use of it, and govern it according to *Rule*, even the rule of Love, as knowing that though you be now free from the *Law of Moses*, yet you are still Servants to the *Law of Love and Charity*. In which respect we must not only be willing to purge out ill and peccant humours, but to lop off even the best members of our bodies when they offend, others, as well as our selves (*Mat. 18. 8, 9.*) because we are bound to love others as ourselves; and therefore 'tis expressly made an argument of Love, *1 John 2. 10. He that loveth his brother, abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him*, i. e. he gives no occasion of offence: Even as a loving husband will forbear the use of such food, though never so pleasing to his own palate, which is offensive to his wife; at least while he is in her company, and under her observation (and this Law of Scandal in Indifferencies holds no further); and so the contrary practice is a breach of Charity, *Rom. 14. 15. If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably*; and that not only in respect of the person scandalized, but of others who take notice

notice of it, 2 Cor. II. 29. *Who is offended, and I burn not?*

Possibly thou maist indeed carefully shun whatsoever is down-right evil, and be tender of doing any thing which is *scandalously unlawful*; O but thou must also take heed of such things as others are apt to put an evil construction and interpretation upon, and so do become *unlawfully scandalous*. *Quantum mali est, saith Ambrose, per illicita non delinquere, & per ea quae concessa sunt offendere; ut lex servetur in illicitis, & in licitis non custodiatur?*

(2) More particularly, to several sorts:  
As,

1. To *Magistrates* and *Governours* to shew themselves to be good *Subjects* to Christ, by their obedience to this Law of his in the Text.

(1) Let them forbear making Laws to enjoin the practice of any thing which themselves account indifferent, that yet is apparently and notoriously scandalous in its use. For besides that they encroach upon Christian Liberty thereby, as has been shew'd before; they transgress the Command of the Apostle here, *Give none offence*. I see no dispensation or exemption they have, but it runs indefinitely, and in general to all, *Give none offence*. As there's a universality in respect of persons scandalized---neither *Jew nor Gentile, &c.* so in respect of persons scandalizing, Let no man do



do it. 'Tis bad enough indeed in private persons to do such indifferent things whereat others are scandalized, but far worse in Governours to establish such an iniquity by a Law, and to enjoin the practice of such things by severe pains and penalties. If others must cover pits wherein a beast may fall, certainly it cannot be lawful for them to make pit-falls wherein the precious souls of men and women, for which Christ died, and which all the world cannot ransom, should fall and hurt themselves. True, they have power to destroy the *bodies* of men, and take away their *natural lives*; but did God ever authorize them to destroy *souls*, and enjoin that which has a direct tendency to the hazard and ruine of the spiritual life? Could not *Paul* as easily have routed all those disputes in his time about *meats* and *days*, and such circumstantial, with a bare word of his mouth, and a peremptory *sic volo, sic jubeo*, if the meer injunction of a superior had made indifferent things to become necessary, and so had been the way to have ended such controversies? Where have any Governours now-a-days more power granted them in these spiritual affairs than he had? Or, why should they not enjoin all persons to go after the same mode, or wear the same apparel? Nay they might with as much reason punish all that are not of the same stature, or complexion, or disposition with themselves; since the forming of the judgement is

Exod. 21.

33.

is no more in our own power, than these things, except there be reasons to sway it one way or other. But suppose their commands should excuse some (which I cannot grant in the least) in the use of those Indifferencies whereat others are offended ; yet what plea can they have for themselves before God, for the commanding such things ? What buckler will they find broad and strong enough to secure them from that *Woe* that Christ denounces against all those by whom offences come ? *Luke 17. 1.* Be wise therefore, O ye Kings, and be instructed ye Rulers and Governours of the Earth, and be tender of poor souls, which are under your care and government.

(2) Let them *Remove* and *Repeal* such Laws as are already made, the matter whereof is any scandalous Indifferency. Let them not only not dig pits, but *cover* such as are already digged. Possibly such an inconvenient consequence might not be foreseen at the first enacting of the Law, and so it might be made inoffensively then ; but when the mischief thereof appears, it cannot lawfully be continued, but must have a due and sufficient remedy immediately applied to it. When *Hzekiah* found that the children of *Israel* burnt incense to the Brazen Serpent that *Moses* had made, though made at first by God's own direction, *He brake it in pieces, and called it Ne-bushtan,* 2 King. 18. 4. so should they as much as in them lies *remove out of their Kingdom all things*

things that offend : to allude to those words of Christ, *Mat. 23. 41.*

(2.) To *Subjects*; not to suffer themselves to be over-ruled by the commands or threats of superiors to the practice of things scandalous and offensive. Will the Law of man bear you out in a transgression of the Law of God ? Do you ever find that the Command of Authority did excuse any, for doing that which otherwise ought not to have been done ? Think not therefore to say within your selves, We have the Precepts of our Governours to shew for our warrant ; for this will not render thee inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that dost such things, since the Law of God here in the Text, is express and peremptory, and universal to the contrary.

Especially *Ministers* (whose whole employment is about, and among Souls, whose whole business is to promote the salvation of souls, and all whose power is for the edification and building up of Souls, not for the making of them stumble, and fall, and perish) should have a very tender respect to the good of poor souls. For them to do any thing, whether upon their own heads, or upon the command of others, which may be a pull-back to souls in the way to Heaven, is worse than others. *Ubi sublimior prerogativa, ibi major culpa*, saith *Salvian*. They are lights set upon an hill ; their actions are more observed, and their example more imitated than others.

Ignorant

Ignorant and loose persons are apt to draw large consequences, and wide and wild conclusions from small premises in them; So that if a Minister do but lawfully use his Christian Liberty, the rude vulgar will thereby open to themselves a gap to all licentiousness. If he be but innocently pleasant, saith one, think they, we may be mad; if he but sip, we may carouse; if he spend but some few hours in his honest and lawful recreations, the common gamester presently concludes, his mispence, both of time and patrimony, to be thence justifiable.

(3) To the *strong*; Be you hence advised to shew your strength by *sloping* and condescending to the infirmities of the weak, and complying with them therein, even to the denying your selves, and laying a restraint upon your selves, as to those indifferences, wherein you have a greater latitude than they. This is that which the Apostle holds forth as the duty of such, *Rom. 15. 1. We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves.* Though it may be pleasurable and delightful to the strong to make use of their liberty, yet they must rather forbear pleasing themselves, than thereby to prejudice their Brethren. You should rather heal them and strengthen them, than wound them and offend them. *Hujusmodi hominibus medicina debetur, non offensio*, saith *Pet. Martyr*. This was Paul's temper and resolution,

*Solution, 1 Cor. 3. 13. If meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my Brother to offend. We use to say, That which is one mans meat, is another mans poison: and De gustibus non est disputandum. And indeed in all cases almost (even of sensible things, as objects of smelling, hearing, seeing, &c. as well as tasting) there are such diversities of apprehensions, that there's no possibility of establishing any uniformity in them, or laying down, and prescribing any general Rule about them, that all persons should either judge or practise alike, as to these things; so that the very nature of man seems to call for, and require a latitude and liberty in them; and therefore there must be a mutual forbearance of one another in all such cases, and allowance of one anothers different sentiments without quarrelling and imposing; yea and not so only, but also a complying with each others humours and fancies, (Remember still that I am speaking of Compliance in Indifferencies) and so to become All things to all men, as Paul did.*

Though thou thy self canst eat (though perhaps not digest) onions and garlick (even of Egypt), yet because there are many weak stomachs that cannot away with the rank smell and savour thereof, and the use of these things renders thy breath stinking unto them, therefore thou should'st forbear. Though thou thy self could'st run along nimbly and securely

in a rugged way, without any danger of stumbling and falling, yet it will be, not so much civil, as *Christian* kindness to stay and take others along with thee that have not that agility and ability thou hast. Though thou canst sing a note above *Ela* thy self, yet thou must so compose thy voice, as may make the best harmony with those thou art joyn'd in consort withall, and not strain it to the highest pitch thou canst.

God by *Moses* pronounced a curse against him that made the *blind to wander out of the way*, Deut. 27. 18. Though thou hast knowledge (1 Cor. 8. 10.) and seest thy way plain enough before thee; yet if by thy example thou ledest him that wants knowledge in a way he is either unacquainted with, or unsatisfied in, thou wilt but bring a curse upon thy self.

(4) To the *weak*; Be you careful rightly to inform your selves concerning the nature of *Indifferencies*, that you may not be scandalized thereby, and so deprive the strong of their liberty therein. Liberty is a sweet thing, and the very notion of restraint is irksome, and grating upon the fancy; as appears in the case of that old man; who having lived all his life long in one place, and never stirred from it, when he came to be confined to that place, and so deprived of his liberty to go elsewhere, the very conceit of it killed him. This restraint of liberty is a *Moral* kind of



of Imprisonment, and therefore the strong may sue you for false imprisonment. Nay thereby you may expose your Ministers to that tyranny and severity, which otherwise they might be free from, and deprive them of that liberty, which otherwise they might enjoy. And therefore ἀπεγκρατεῖς γίνεσθε, in this sense also, Be not apt to take offence. You can never have any just or blameless cause of being offended,

or taking offence, as Aquinas shews. As 'tis the duty of the strong not to give offence, so of the weak not to take offence. 'Tis the Apostle's Rule, Rom. 14. 3. Let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth. \* Every one should be left to his own liberty in these things. Why should you any more desire to have all others shrunken up, or cut shorter, to your size and proportion, than they

should desire such dwarfs as you are to be extended and stretcht out to their proportion? That's an excellent Rule of Dr. Sanderson (with which I shall conclude), The best and safest way for us in all indifferent things, is to be indulgent to others, but strict to our selves; in allowing them their liberty with the most, but taking our own liberty ever with the least. Serm. on 1 Pet. 2. 16. sect. 34.

222. q. 43. 2. 1.  
Non solum scandalizare, sed  
& scandalizari, peccatum est,  
quia infirmitatis est, faith  
Maldon in Mat. 18. 7.

\* Infirmitas est & ignorantium, firmioribus jus & libertatem suam relinquere, & eadentem, gnarum sua libertatis, non condemnare. Rivet. in Syn. pur. Theol. Disp. 35. Sect. 36.

[illegible]

1900

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of the President of the American Society of Theology, for the year 1900:

1. The first of these is the fact that the  
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Good Sir,

**H**AVING this safe way of conveyance,  
 I return you the Manuscript you  
 were pleas'd to communicate to me, some  
 time since. I have deliberately read it over,  
 and with much satisfaction; I do concur  
 with you in your notions in all things mate-  
 rial, and I think the controversie is clearly  
 stated, so as might satisfie those that are  
 impartial, and them that are not, nothing  
 will satisfie, but their own interest, and  
 their own humour; but I have lookt upon the  
Question about Indifferent Things, and  
 their Imposition, as managed by all Church-  
 men, to be but a pretence to puzzle the Con-  
 science with niceties, while they maintain'd  
 and increased among us Popish and carnal  
 Ceremonies, to hinder profitable Preaching,  
 and the power of Godliness; and now we  
 have liv'd to see the Mask pull'd off, when  
 many of them are not ashamed to profess  
 that they are more afraid of Presbyterians  
 than Papists, and that they had rather Pa-  
 pists should prevail than Presbyterians;  
 but the times are coming that will lay all  
 men open: the Lord make us faithful and  
 prudent. Hearty thanks for the use of your  
 Book, from

Your assured Friend and  
 Brother in the Lord,

Dear Sir,  
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst. in relation to the matter of the  
and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.  
I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. H. [Name]  
[Address]

# AN EXERCITATION ON

*Mat. 15. 1—9. Mark 7. 1—13.*

SECT. I. **T**HE imposed use of *Indifferences* has been (like the *Canaanites* to the *Israelites*) pricks in the eyes, and thorns (or goads) in the sides of, i. e. matter of much mischief and vexation to, the Church of God almost in all ages; Especially, in the *Jewish* Church, when it drew towards the dregs, much of this sediment appeared. How far the *Papal, Anti-christian* Church is over-run with this ill humour, is notorious: And it's one great evil which our *English* Church now labours and groans under at this day. 'Tis this, which has been the apple of contention, and bone of division; the stone of stumbling, and rock of offence among us, ever since the beginning of the Reformation, in the time of our *Foetab,*  
King

King *Edward the 6th.* And after many years freedom from this itch, it brake out again some years since, to our great disturbance, and scratching of one another.

Now for the better fixing our judgements concerning either our Liberty or Restraint in such cases, I shall enter upon a strict examination, and narrow consideration of this portion of Scripture, which furnishes us with one of the most pregnant, and pertinent instances, or Historical passages to this purpose, in the whole New Testament; which I shall examine from top to toe. that thereby we may discover how far forth it will help us, either one way or other, *i. e.* either for Conformity, or Non-conformity, in such like cases.

*Seet. 2.* The whole passage contains a discourse between Christ, and the Scribes and Pharisees, concerning the observation of the Traditions of the Elders, occasion'd by the Disciples neglect thereof; for which the Scribes and Pharisees implead them to their Master, and quarrel him about it: In which he vindicates 'em at large, and blows up the very foundation of their complaint, by showing the invalidity, yea impiety, of these Traditions. This is the general prospect of the whole. In handling of which, I shall first distinctly consider the several particulars; and then make such Reflections up-

on



on 'em, and draw such Inferences from 'em, as they naturally afford, and may be conducive to my present design.

The Particulars contain'd in the foregoing General, take as follows. Here are (1) the *Accusers*. (2) The *Accused*. (3) The *Accusation*. (4) The *Defence*.

*Sect. 3.* First, The *Accusers*; *Scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem*; or, *which came from Jerusalem*. These may be considered both in reference to their *Condition, Scribes and Pharisees*; and in reference to their *Habitation*, or the place from whence they came, *Jerusalem*.

(1) *Scribes*; this is a Title of Function or Imployment; they might be either *Priests* or *Levites*, for we find *Scribes* of both sorts; *Priests*, as *Neh. 8.9. Ezra the Priest the Scribe*. So *Ezra 7. 11. Levites*, as *2 Chron. 34. 13. Of the Levites there were Scribes, &c.* *1 Chron. 24. 6. Shemajah, the son of Nethaneel the Scribe, one of the Levites*. But which soever they were, they were, as to their Office and Employment, *Teachers and Expounders of the Law* in their Schools and Synagogues; as *Ezra 7. 6. --a ready Scribe in the Law of Moses. v. 10. He had prepared his heart to teach in Israel statutes and judgements. Neh. 8. 1--9, 13. Matth. 7. 29. He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes: and so elsewhere.* And hence

They

They were commonly the most learned and conversant in the Law; as is implied by that question, *Matth. 17. 10. Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?* and therefore, saith *Gerard, Doctissimi quique Yeguarōi; vocabantur*: and *Brugensis, Scribae scientiae auctoritatem sibi vendicabant*. Upon this account *Herod* consulted them about the place of *Christ's Nativity, Matth. 2. 4.*

(2) *Sect. 4. Pharisees*; they are generally spoken of as Teachers too, *Matth. 16. 6, 12.--leaven, i.e. the Doctrine of the Pharisees*. These were such as did separate themselves (as the word signifies) from other men; Yet

Negatively, (1) Not in regard of refraining their society and converse, either publick or private; for, they sate in the great Council with the *Sadducees, Acts 23. 6.* and *Herodians, Mark 3. 6:* went into other mens houses, *Mark 2. 16.* conversed with all sorts of men to Proselyte 'em, *Mat. 23. 15.* and conferred ordinarily with *Christ* and his Disciples, as here, and elsewhere: Nor (2) in refraining the publick assemblies, and places of publick worship; for *Luke 6. 6, 7.* there were Pharisees in the Synagogue at publick worship. But,

Positively, In respect of a singularity of Holiness and Devotion, which they pretended unto, and took upon them to have, above others. They'd seem to transcend the Rule of the

the State-Religion, and common Devotion of the Nation ; to be in a higher Form than others, and to strain a note above *Ela*, in the scale of Holiness ; and that in these two things especially : (1) In extream ceremoniousness ; as in frequent washings, large Phylacteries, &c. and (2) in extraordinary devotion, as in long Prayers, much show of Fastings ; tithing Mint, &c.

(3) *Scribes and Pharisees* joyn'd together. They were both of them, as has been said, the great Preachers and Professors of the Law ; and here, as frequently elsewhere, they joyn together to oppose and oppress Christ and his Disciples, and go hand in hand ; that what they cannot effect by single strength, they may obtain by their united forces. *Scribes* was a title of Function, and

*Pharisee* of Devotion : a the one were pretenders to more than ordinary strictness in Religion, the other valued themselves upon the score of their learning :

a *Pharisæi perfectioris exteriorum observantia exemplum, scriba scientia auctoritatem sibi vendicabant.*  
Brug.

And thus under the Banners and Colours of pretended devotion and learning, they fight against Christ.

(4) *From Jerusalem.* (1) Not of the ordinary and common sort, such as did belong to every Synagogue in inferior Cities, but of the chief City, *Jerusalem* ; and such were, likely,

*a* Hi doctrina & religionis totius obtinebant arcem. Brug. Judæi in Galilæâ submiserrunt Scribas & Phariseos, non vulgares illos, quales in singulis Galilææ Synagogis habebantur, sed qui Ferofolymis erant præcipui, qui eruditione, solertiâ, & autoritate, addo etiam, & malitiâ reliquos superabant. Ger. Har

likely, *a* of the ablest and bitterest of them, and did excell the other Rusticks in learning and craft, and perhaps, in malice too.

(2) They came a great way: Christ was now in the land of Gennefaret, *Matth. 14.*

34. *Mark 6. 53.* which was a great way from *Ferusalem*, near a hundred miles,

as I find by the Map; whereby we see, what pains

wicked men will take to oppose Christ, and create trouble to his Disciples and Servants.

*Señ. 5.* From all which particulars it is obvious to observe, That corrupt Churchmen in high places, are the old, great sticklers for humane inventions, and ceremonious observances. These great Rabbies of the first magnitude, who shone with the greatest outward splendor, were the great Engines to withdraw the people from Christ, and the chief Supporters and Pillars of their old *Mumfimus* customs. And so all along; None greater Enemies to pure, spiritual, Gospel-worship, than Ceremony-mongers, and superstitious Zealots. *Luther* had no sorer opposites out of Ale-houses, and Brothel-houses, than he had out of Religious Houses, as they called

called them. None more dangerously wound Religion, than they, who, before men, would seem the most zealous Patrons and Promoters of it. It's often seen, that the more learned, the more *lewd*: Wickedness is thereby armed with weapons, both for *Offence* and *Defence*. Unsanctified Learning, or learned wickedness, is *ἀδίκημα ἡγοσα ὅπλα*, as *Aristotle* speaks. It is like a Sword in a mad-mans hand, which enables him to cast about firebrands, arrows and death; as it is *Prov. 26. 18.* *Nil novi nec insolens est;* Hence Philosophers are *ut illi qui primatum sibi in* called by the Fathers, *Hæc Ecclesia vendicant, primi* *reticorum Patriarchæ*; the *etiam sint, qui de opprimendo* ringleaders and Captains of *Christo & ejus Evangelio;* such as fight against Christ. *consilia agitent. Ger.*

2. *Seet. 6.* The *Accused*; immediately and directly the Disciples, *Why do thy Disciples transgress,* &c. but secretly and collaterally, Christ himself; they shoot at him through the others sides; and seem to insinuate, as if he were to be blamed for teaching 'em no better, and suffering 'em to walk so disorderly, without reprovng 'em for it. Thus they dealt also, *Matth. 9. 14.* --- *Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?*

But I shall insist no further upon this, but hasten to that which I chiefly aim at, which is, the two following Points,

2 *Hi doctrina & religionis totius obtinebant arcem. Brug. Judæi in Galilæâ submiserrunt Scribas & Phariseos, non vulgares illos, quales in singulis Galilææ Synagogis habebantur, sed qui Ferosolymis erant præcipui, qui eruditione, solertiâ, & authoritate, addo etiam, & malitiâ reliquos superabant. Ger. Har*

likely, & of the ablest and bitterest of them, and did excell the other Rusticks in learning and craft, and perhaps, in malice too. (2) They came a great way: Christ was now in the land of Genesaret, *Matth. 14. 34. Mark 6. 53.* which was a great way from *Ferusalem*, near a hundred miles, as I find by the Map; whereby we see, what pains

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2. *Señ. 6.* The *Accused*; immediately and directly the Disciples, *why dost thy Disciples transgress*, &c. but secretly and collaterally, Christ himself; they shoot at him through the others sides; and seem to insinuate, as if he were to be blamed for teaching 'em no better, and suffering 'em to walk so disorderly, without reprovng 'em for it. Thus they dealt also, *Matth. 9. 14.* --- *Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?*

But I shall insist no further upon this, but hasten to that which I chiefly aim at, which is, the two following Points,

viz. The *Accusation* it self, and the *De-fence*.

3. *Seft. 7.* The *Accusation* it self, or the *Practice*, or *Usage* concerning which the *Contest* and *Dispute* arose, which is,

In *General*, a *Transgression* of the *Tradition* of the *Elders*, or *Disobedience* to the *Injunctions* of *Authority*.

*Particularly*, *Eating* with *unwashed* hands. The former relates to the *Authority* enjoyning; The latter is the *Practice* enjoyned.

As to the former, the *General*, I shall consider (1) Who these *Elders* were. (2) What was a *Tradition* of the *Elders*.

*Seft. 8.* First, Who these *Elders* were. The word [*Elders*] in its primary and original sense, relates to *Age*, and denotes, either such as lived a *great while*; even till they came to be old; or, such as lived a *great while ago*; those of former times; as *Deut. 32. 7.* *Heb. 11. 2.* and so 'tis the same with ἀρχαῖοι, *Matth. 5. 21.* and thence it's derived to signify most commonly, both *Dignity* and *Authority*; and so we find both in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Latin*, and *English* (to name no more) the words importing *Age* or *Eldership*, viz. עֲלֵי, γερουσία, *Senatus*, *Äldermen*, do denote both *Honour* and *Power*. And

(1) This

(1) This sense is very frequent both in the Old and New Testament. I shall mention but a few places of the chief ; as *Deut. 22. 15.* --the Elders of City in the gate (the place of Judicature). And they are sometimes called, *Elders of the people*, i. e. such who had authority over the people ; as *Elders of a City*, are they that are in power in that City. Thus *Matth. 26. 3.* Then assembled together the chief Priests, and Scribes, and Elders of the people. So *c. 27. 1.* When the morning was come, all the chief Priests, and Elders of the people took counsel, &c.

Hence they are commonly joyned with [Rulers] ; as *2 King. 10. 1.* Jehu wrote letters --to the Rulers of Jezreel, and to the Elders. *Act. 4. 8.* Ye Rulers and Elders of Israel ; and they are very frequently joyn'd with [chief Priests, and Scribes and Pharisees ;] and then the distinction that was between them, I conceive may be stated thus ; As they were distinguish'd from the Priests, they seem to be Lay-men (as we call 'em), and as distinguish'd from Scribes, they were such as were not brought up wholly in the study of the Law, or at least did not make that their Profession ; but were some of the Nobility and Gentry, admitted to be Members of the Sanhedrim, as is most evident from these places following. *Acts 22. 5.* The High Priest doth bear me witness, with all the estate of the Elders ; from whom also I received letters unto the brethren,

and went to *Damascus*, to bring them which were there, bound unto *Jerusalem*, for to be punished : and c. 24. 1. *Ananias* the High Priest descended with the Elders, who informed the Governour against *Paul*. *Matth.* 26. 59. Now the chief Priests and Elders, and all the Council, sought false witness against *Jesus*, &c. *Mark* 15. 1. The chief Priests held a consultation with the Elders and Scribes, and the whole Council. So that nothing is more clear, than that they were Members of the Council, and persons in, and of, Authority.

I have been the more full in this point, because *Grotius in loc.* thinks that these Elders here mentioned, though they were learned and wise men, and so possibly might be Members of the *Sanhedrim* upon that account ; yet that the mention made of 'em here, does not relate to any such capacity they were in ; but only, as celebrated Teachers, who were not only famous in their Generations, but were had in great veneration and esteem in after-times, and their judgements and dogmes were of great authority. And so *Beza* takes 'em too, only for the ancient Doctors, and not for persons in authority. But even *Grotius* himself elsewhere (*viz. in Acts* 4. 5.) gives this account of 'em, *Seniores, idem quod Senatores, & consules Urbium.* Elders are the same with the Senate, or Court of Aldermen, or, at least, Common-council-men, and Bar-  
gesse

[ II ]

*gesses of Cities*: And the places forementioned do most evidently and undeniably evince, that they were persons in authority, and members of the *Sanbedrim* (as I said before) or great Council of the Nation: And therefore

*sect. 9. (2)* They were the proper Judges of Ecclesiastical affairs, to whose cognisance matters of Religion did appertain. *Hi doctrina & religionis totius obtinebant arcem, & inquisitionem proinde, censuramque doctrinarum sibi arrogabant. Commoti igitur fama crebrescente de Jesu, emiserunt e suis quosdam (sicut etiam Mar. 3. 22.) qui observarent quid doceret, quidque faceret, in Galileâ, Jesus, novus ille Doctor, ab ipsis nec missus, nec probatus, faith Brugenfis.*

And particularly, It was the peculiar privilege of those Doctors who were Members of the great Council to frame such Decrees, Constitutions or Traditions. This I gather from that passage of the *Targum* on *Eccles. 12. 12.* where it is said, *רַבֵּנֵי סַנְהֶדְרִין מֵרֵי הַלְכָּתִין*, which the Translation in our *Polyglot Bible* renders *Magistri Sanbedrim, scil. ductores viarum*; as if *הַלְכָּתִין* were to be taken according to the proper signification of the word, from *הלך* *ambulavit*; whereas it is most usually taken in the Metaphorical sense, for *Consuetudo, ratio, mos, ritus, judicium*; and among

the *Rabbins* and *Talmudists* it signifies (saith *Buxtorf*) *Constitutio juris, sententia, decisio, traditio decisa*; & usu ac consuetudine recepta & approbata, secundum quod incedendum & vivendum. *Lex Talm. in voc. 777*; and accordingly it is to be rendred here, *Doctores synedrii, qui sunt Domini consuetudinum, sive constitutionum juridicarum. The Doctors of the Council, who are the grand Masters of Traditions.* And hence

(3) We may easily imagine the reason why the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* here, were so much concern'd at this neglect of the *Disciples*, viz. because their own Copyhold was toucht, and their own authority lay at stake, inasmuch as they were the *Successors* of these *Elders*; so that the slight that was put upon the one, redounded to the disparagement of the other. *Non mirum Scribas violatione traditionum seniorum cito offensos fuisse, quod eo & ipsorum autoritas elevari videretur, qui jam Seniorum locum tenerent, illorum successores, & institutorum propagatores, saith Brugenfis.* Hence *Christ* calls 'em your *Traditions*.

So then, The *Elders* here meant were such as lived in former times, who were persons of great Dignity and Authority, to whose cognisance matters of Religion did appertain, and to whom it belonged to form and frame these *Constitutions* or *Traditions*.

Where,



Where, by the way, you may take notice (and that you may take the more and better notice of it, know, That it is the Observation of the prodigiously learned {Dr. *Stillingsfleet* ) That the word [*Elder*] or *Presbyter*, according to the common use of it, has a higher Character, and is of more excellent import, than the word [*Bishop*]; the former noting Dignity and Authority, (as has been show'd) ; the latter, only matter of Duty, Charge, Trouble and Business. His words are, *Επίσκοπος*, a name importing Duty more than Honour, and not a Title above *Presbyter*, but rather used by way of diminution and qualification of the power implied in the name [*Presbyter*]. *Iren.* p. 286. But this by the by. Thus you see, Who these Elders were.

2: The next thing to be spoken unto, is to show, What the Traditions of these Elders were: And here I shall consider (1) their *Nature*. (2) *Original*. (3) *Validity*, or, what stress they laid upon 'em.

*Seet. 10.* First, What a Tradition is, A Tradition, in general, is something delivered from one to another; and it is twofold, *Divine*, and *Humane*.

(1) *Divine*, which is, either matters of *Doctrine*, delivered either by God himself, or some immediately inspired by him; and so, both the Verb *παράδοσις*, and the

Noun *παράδοσις* are used concerning the points of Christianity. Thus the Apostle Paul received from God, and delivered to the Church the Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, *1 Cor. 11. 23.* and of Christ's Death and Resurrection, *1 Cor. 15. 3.* yea, the whole Doctrine of the Gospel in general is a Tradition, delivered or conveyed to us, *Rom. 6. 17. 2 Thes. 2. 15. Jude 3.* Again, Divine Traditions respect matters of Practice also; and these are Constitutions, or Ordinances appointed by God, or some immediately inspired by him, for the use of the Church, as the word seems to be taken, *1 Cor. 11. 2. Now I praise you Brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the Ordinances (Margin, Traditions) as I have delivered them to you. And more plainly 2 Thes. 3. 6.*

(2) *Humane*; called here, Traditions of the Elders; *your Traditions, v. 3, 6. your own Traditions, Mark 7. 9. the Traditions of men, Mark 7. 8. Col. 2. 8. and of the Fathers, Gal. 1. 14.* And these likewise are either *Doctrinal*, concerning some points of Doctrine, as *Matth. 5. 21, &c.* and therefore are called expressly the *Doctrine of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees, Matth. 16. 12.* Concerning which, *Grotius* observes, That that which the Greek Philosophers called *Νόμος*, Christ here calls *διδασχῆ*, a Doctrine, Instruction, Article, or point of Faith;

or

or else; they are *Practical*, being customs and external observances, invented by men, and delivered from hand to hand from Father to Son: and such Traditions were these here of the Elders; and those *Col. 2. 20, 21*. And these are the Traditions under Consideration.

Now such a Tradition, is an Ordinance, \* Institution, Canon, Constitution, Resolution, Decision, or Determination of their

\* *παραδοσις*, institutum  
hoc constitutionem vertere  
possumus, Eras.

Forefathers the Governours of the Church, delivered down from one to another, enjoining the observation of such and such Rites, Ceremonies or Practices.

The former of these sorts, *viz.* *Divine* Traditions, are the Rule and Ground of our Faith, Worship and Obedience; The latter, *Humane*, do naturally produce Superstition and Will-worship: and of this sort there were multitudes upon all occasions, so that the whole *Talmud* is little else than a Collection of 'em. I'll give you a taste, and but a taste of 'em. It was a Tradition, that on a Festival-day it was not lawful to blow the fire with a pair of bellows, because that had some resemblance of a Mechanick work; but they might blow it through a hollow Cane. Again, On a Festival-day it was not lawful to lay wood on the fire in an artificial manner, so as  
to

to resemble a building. But enough of these.

*Self. 11.* Secondly. What was the ground they went upon, or the occasion of their first broaching these Traditions? In general, it was, as they express it, לַעֲשׂוֹת סֵיף לַדִּבְרֵי תֹרָה To make a hedge to the Law, that men should not break in upon it to transgress it: and this was a specious colour for all their Traditions; for they pretending to make Constitutions to fence the Law from violation, and to raise the observance of it the higher, they multiplied inventions and fancies of their own brains, and set 'em up for Laws, and so made the Law indeed nothing worth. I shall give you an instance but in one of 'em. The written Law forbade, *Thou shalt not see the a kid in his Mothers milk*, *Exod. 23. 19.* Now to make sure, as they pretended, that this Law should not be violated, they fenced it with this Tradition, *Thou shalt not see the any flesh whatsoever in any milk whatsoever.*

Thus we see, how very apt men are to set their posts by God's Pillars, to light up their Candles to his Sun, to put their varnish upon his Gold, and, like Botchers, to patch their inventions upon his Institutions. The *Jewish Rabbies*, under a specious pretence of Piety, brought in whole loads of this kind of trash, which they called

*Sepi-*

*sepimenta legis*, but were indeed but impedimenta, because God's Commands were thereby frustrated, as our Saviour Christ shows here, in the sequel of this discourse. This is the general reason: But

As for the particular grounds of particular Traditions, I shall have occasion to mention some afterwards.

*Sect. 12.* Thirdly, What was their Validity? Of what account they were among the *Jews*, and what value they put upon 'em, appears by many passages in their Authors. It is a saying of the *Talmudists*, דברי קבלה קדברי תורה דמו *Verba Cabala equiparantur verbis Legis*. Here they set them cheek by jole (as we say) with the Commands of God: but this is not all; they set 'em even above the Law of God it self, and make that to lacquey behind: for this is another saying in the *Talmud* (as *Grotius* quotes it) *Plus est in verbis Scribarum quam in verbis Legis*; There's more weight in the words of the Scribes, than in the words of the Law. And *Dr. Lightfoot* quotes another to the same purpose, The words of the Elders are more lovely than the words of the Law, and more weighty than the words of the Prophets. Hence they say of this Tradition in particular, That he that eats his bread with unwashen hands, sins as grievously as if he lay with a Whore. So saith *R. Jose* in *Talm.*

*Talm. Sota. c. 1.* yea, saith *R. Akiba*, he deserves to dye for it; and accordingly, water being once brought to him both for drinking and washing, and the greatest part of it being casuallly spilt, the remainder he used for washing, saying, *That it's better to dye, than to transgress the tradition of the Elders.* And this is a saying too, among them. Who-soever dwells in the land of *Israel*, and eats his ordinary food after a cleanly manner, and speaks in the holy language, and saith over his *Phylacteries* morning and evening, may be confident that he shall obtain happiness in the world to come.

But lest any should take these Traditions for matters of Counsel only, or bare opinion, which laid no manner of obligation upon them, and because a passage of *Grotius*, formerly quoted and animadverted upon, may seem to look that way (though what has been said already under this last head, does abundantly prove what an high opinion they had of them in point of their obligatoriness) Yet further, as I shew'd before, that the word [*Elder*] denotes persons of a publick Character, and such as were in places of power and authority, and not only persons in a private capacity; so I shall further prove, by several Arguments, that the Traditions of these Elders were not points of opinion only, but matters of injunction and command.



sect. 13. (1) This Tradition is expressly called מצות חכמים a Precept of the wise men, both by Maimonides in Hilchos Brachos, c. 6. sect. 2. נטירת ידים מצות חכמים וכו'. Washing the hands is a precept of the wise men, to which we are absolutely bound to yield obedience, according to what is written, Deut. 17. 11. According to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee---thou shalt do. And also by the Talmud, Washing of hands is by reason of the command of the wise men. And accordingly,

(2) These Traditions are called, Commandments of men, here by Christ, Mark 7. 7. and opposed to the Commandments of God, v. 8. and what is called in one verse, a Tradition, is called in the other, Commandments of men; so that they seem to be convertible terms, Mark 7. 7; 8. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the Commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, &c.

(3) The word [transgress] (Why do thy Disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders?) implies, that they held them obligatory; and that these Traditions laid an obligation upon them; for, why else do they tax the Disciples for the transgression thereof, if they did not take 'em to have the nature of a law? For, Transgression properly belongs to a law, or something that has a binding power in it, 1 John 3. 4.

(4) The

(4) The drift and design of our Saviour's Answer and Vindication, is to show that the people were not obliged thereby, and that these Traditions were of no force or validity at all; which shows that they look't upon 'em as obligatory.

(5) These *Elders*, who were the Authors of these Traditions, were members of the Senate, and Rulers (as was proved afore), and consequently, a Tradition, or Decision of their's, had the nature of a law, and was of a binding power, being the act of the whole body; as we find it was in this particular case: for the whole body of the Council espoused the quarrel of this Rite; for they Excommunicated *R. Eliezer*, because he slighted this Ceremony of washing of hands; and then when he was dead, they commanded a great stone to be laid on his Coffin, in token of their detestation of him; or to note, That his Coffin was to be stoned; saith the *Talmud*, in *Edajoth*, cap. 5.

(6) The *Hebrew* Edition of *Matthew* by *Munster*, renders [traditions of the Elders] by מִן־הַזִּקְנִים. Now מִן־הַזִּקְנִים is rendered by *Buxtorf*, *Pactum*, *decretum*, *statutum*, *constitutio*, *sententia*; from נָרַךְ *decernere*, *statuere*, *definire*.

And thus we have dispatch't the consideration of the General ground of their complaint, viz. A transgression of the Tradition  
of

of the Elders, by showing, Who these Elders were: What a Tradition of the Elders was, both as to the Nature, Ground, and Validity thereof.

Come we now to the particular cause of their quarrel, viz. *Eating with unwashen hands*. And here many things offer themselves to our consideration: As

*Sect. 14.* (1) This *washing* is called by the Jews נְטִילַת יָדַיִם לְסַעֲדָה *Lifting up the hands* (viz. to wash) for dinner; because in washing they lifted them up in a formal, ceremonious manner (as we shall see anon), or, as St. Mark expresses it, *μετὰ δὲ* diligently.

(2) The Rabbins say it was to be used only before the eating of ordinary bread. Thus Maimon. in *Hilchós Brachos*, c. 6. *sect. 1.* *Quicumque comedit panem super quo convenit recitare benedictionem istam Benedixit, &c. qui educit panem à terrâ, opus habet lavare manus ab initio & fine, etiamsi sit panis communis.* (The Reasons whereof the learned Reader may see in Buxtorf's Discourse *De lotione manuum*, *sect 11.*) And therefore you may observe that express mention is made of *bread* here several times, *Matth. 15. 2.* *Mark 7. 2, 5.* And therefore they allow'd a man to eat fruit, cheese, herbs or fish with unwashen hands.

(3) This

(3) This *washing* was from רָשִׁי אֶצְבָּעוֹת, *the ends of the fingers*, wherewith they took their meat, עַד הַפֶּרֶק *usque ad juncturam*, *to the joyning*; which some understand, of the joyning of the fingers to the hand, but most generally, of the joyning of the hands to the arm, at the wrist (and not of the joyning up at the elbow, as *Capellus* contends;) for which *Buxtorf* produces many passages in his *Vindic. Exercit. in hist. Institut. Cæn. Domin. advers. animad. Lud. Capelli. sect. 55.*

*Seft. 15.* (4) For the *Manner*, it was performed, either by *pouring* the water upon the hands by another person, or by one's self, if none else were at hand to do it; or else by *dipping* the hands in the water. If it were done by *pouring*, the water was to be poured upon the hands two or three times. First; If the hands be dirty, to cleanse 'em from the dirt; (2) To take away the moral uncleanness (as they accounted it). (3) To cleanse them from that second water, which took the moral uncleanness to it self, and therefore must all be washed off.

Several other Rules and Directions are given, both as to the *Quality* and *Quantity* of the water; as also concerning the *Vessel* that the water is to be put into, which may be seen in the forementioned Author, *sect. 24-28.*

(5) They

(5) They were to lift up their hands (whence it was called *Netilas yadajim*, as was said) that the water might not run back from the hands to the fingers, and so defile them again: for they held, that the water that was poured upon the hands did contract moral defilement thereby, as was said.

(6) They were to pull off Rings, Plaisters, or any such thing that was upon the hands, and to rub 'em well, and then dry 'em thoroughly.

These things I have run over briefly, that I might hasten to the following particulars, which are more to my purpose.

*sect. 16.* (7) This usage or practice of washing the hands before meat, was not contrary to the Word of God, or any where forbidden by it in particular; It is no where said in the whole Bible, Thou shalt not wash thy hands before meat, no more than it is said any where, Thou shalt not baptize with the sign of the Cross; Thou shalt not wear a Surplice, &c. Nay,

(8) It was so far from that, that they pretended a particular ground from Scripture for it, viz. that command, *Levit. 15. 11.* *Whomsoever he touches that hath the issue, and hath not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash*

his cloaths, &c. The account of which you have at large in the *Talmud*, *Massecketh*, Col. 1. (as 'tis quoted by *Buxtorf* in the fore-mentioned Discourse, *sect.* 4. 5. ) in these words, נְטִילַת יָדַיִם וְכוּ, *Lotio manuum ad communem & prophanum cibum est propter co-  
hassionem Trumæ*, (concerning which, see his *Lex. Talm. Voc.* תְּרוּמָה). Imo etiam propter *præceptum sapientum. Quale præceptum? Avai  
dixit, Illud præceptum, quo jubemur obtemperare  
verbis sapientum. Rabba dixit; Imo propter  
id quod R. Eliezer ben Ezech dixit, qui docuit,  
ex eo quod scriptum est Levit. 15. 11. Omnis  
autem quem tetigerit seminisfluus, & manus suas  
non abluerit aquâ, &c. collegisse ac decrevisse  
sapientes, lotionem manuum esse ex lege. Gro-  
sius in loc. gives another account of it, viz.  
That these Jewish Rabbies thought that if  
any uncircumcised person, or any one of  
their own Nation legally unclean, had touch-  
ed either the meat or drink, or any other  
thing that did touch the meat or drink, as  
their hands wherewith they were to take  
the meat or drink, or had touch't the pots  
wherein the meat was boil'd, or the cups  
out of which they were to drink, that then  
the meat or drink was defiled, and did com-  
municate its defilement or uncleanness first  
to the body, and then to the soul of the per-  
son that did eat or drink thereof: where-  
upon, as an Antidote or Remedy hereof,  
these*



these cleanly persons prescribed such a ceremonious, methodical, artificial kind of washing. But I take the former account out of their own Authors, to be the most authentick; and pertinent.

Whereby we may perceive that this Tradition of theirs has the advantage of our Ceremonies, for there is no particular precept alledged for the establishment or countenancing any of them; yea, there's little or nothing of Reason can be said for 'em, (And in this respect indeed they may be called *Innocent Ceremonies*; as we call those *Innocents*, who have nothing of Reason in 'em;) but their Defenders, when assaulted with Reason, are fain to shelter themselves under the wings of Authority, and cry *King's Truce*, as boys do, *i. e.* They are commanded by Authority, and therefore we must yield obedience, when we are enjoyned nothing that is contrary to the Word of God; But though they pretended warrant from Scripture, yet

(9) They did not enjoyn it as immediately binding the conscience, or commanded by God directly, but only by consequence; and therefore they call'd it מצות חכמים (as was said before) a *Precept of the wise men*, and said it was מצות סופרים one of the words or commands of the Scribes; but that it was not מצות ייחא any of the commands of the law. L 2 Nay

Nay (Lastly) it might seem to be a point of Civility, and a piece of cleanliness, which no doubt but both Christ and the Disciples might use upon occasion, though only as a matter of civility, wherein Religion was not concern'd either one way or other, whether it were done or not.

And this too is more than can be said on the behalf of our Ceremonies; for there is no such, either Decency, or Conveniency in the use of them.

But yet for all this Christ here opposes and condemns this Tradition, which brings me to the last Point to be spoken unto, *viz.*

4. And lastly, (*seff. 17.*) The Defence, Plea or Vindication that Christ makes in the behalf of his Disciples in this particular; which is (1) by way of Retortion, or Recrimination, *Why do you also transgress the command of God by your tradition, Matth. 15. 3.* (2) By way of Reprehension, or taxing them for their hypocrisy, *Mark 7. 6. He answered and said unto them, Well has Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, Sec.* (3) By way of Instruction to the people, *Matth. 15. 10. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand, Sec.*

1. By way of Retortion, or Recrimination, *Why do you also transgress the Command of God*

by your Tradition ? For God commanded, saying, &c. They accuse the Disciples for transgressing the Tradition of the Elders, and Christ accuses them for transgressing the Command of God, by their observing these Traditions ; which was certainly much more blame-worthy than the other. And here I observe,

(1) That in those words, v. 3. he undermines the very foundation upon which all this tottering building of Traditions stood ; For it was a principle among them, That the Traditions of the Elders were to be observed most religiously, without any exception, contradiction, or dispute ; but now Christ here proves, That some of their Traditions did palpably and evidently contradict and interfere with the Law of God ; and therefore they were not all of 'em so strictly and inviolably to be observed, as they held. And then,

(2) As to this particular instance he gives, v. 4--6. I observe, He does not so much reply to their particular question, nor argue against this Tradition in particular, which the Pharisees here stood up for, but chuses rather to instance in one which did more evidently and by plain consequence overthrow one of the Commands of God : so that hereby He seems to me plainly to intimate, and insinuate, That all

such Traditions, i. e. Ecclesiastical Canons, Constitutions, Injunctions, and obligatory Determinations, concerning unnecessary things, (whereby men endeavour to render that practice necessary, which God has left free) are contrary to the Law of God, and consequently invalid and non-obligatory. Understand it, of what is not necessary, neither in its own Nature, nor by any Circumstance; according to what has been delivered in the foregoing Discourse. Now that this is the drift of Christ in these words, I prove thus:

Either He does here by this one instance argue against, and condemn all Traditions in general, as well as this one, or he does not. If he does not, then his arguing is inconsequent and unconcluding, as to the point in hand: For the Pharisees might reply, Well! suppose you can pick out one Tradition, which you say does plainly derogate from a Command of God, yet what's that to the case before us? This that we implead your Disciples for, is none of those, but founded upon a particular law; and therefore that stands firm, and ought to be observed, as not liable to this exception; and so, they are guilty for not observing it. But now that Christ should argue thus loosely and incoherently, is by no means to be admitted. Shall He who gave to man the faculty of Reason,

Reason, be defective in any point of Reason himself? As the Psalmist argues concerning God's Knowledge and Providence, *Psal.* 94. 9, 10. *He that planted the ear, shall not be bear? He that formed the eye, shall be not see? — He that teaches man knowledge, shall not he know?* So may we say in this case. True, the Reason of Christ's discourses sometimes lies very deep, that it's hard for us to fathom it with our short understandings, and to attain to a clear apprehension of it: but however, we cannot without blasphemy admit of any flaw in it, or deny it to be firm, valid and concluding.

But then, if He did here argue against all such Traditions in general, my Observation stands good, and I have gained my Point. And hence it will follow,

(3) That to observe such Traditions, and Institutions, is so far from being a Duty, that it is a sin; because thereby the Law of God is transgressed.

*Self.* 18. 2. Christ's Reply is by way of Reprehension, and taxing their hypocrisie. *Matth.* 15. 7--9. *Ye hypocrites, &c.* The people indeed had a great veneration for them, and lookt upon them as great Devoto's and Religionists: but Christ puts off their vizard, uncovers their nakedness, and lays open their hypocrisie; and that, by applying to them

that prophecie of *Isaiab*, *This people draws nigh*, &c. i. e. they pretend a great deal of Religion in their outward carriage, and seem to be very diligent in all external duties, but all is but from the teeth outward: their Religion is but a meer carcass, without any life, or soul, or spirit in it; the heart is wanting. Here he opens the fountain of this evil, which was, The placing all Religion in outward ceremonies, and superstitious observances.

V. 9. *But in vain do they worship me*] i. e. They shall not only not get any good by such worship, but shall bring upon themselves the wrath of God, and consequently a great deal of evil and mischief, by their thus --teaching for Doctrines] i. e. instead of Doctrines, the commandments of men.] The word [*Doctrine*] is usually taken for those points either of Faith or Duty, which are delivered in Preaching; and here it must relate, particularly, to matters of worship, as is evident, both because that is the business in hand, which Christ is here speaking of; and also, by comparing these words with those of *Isaiab*, whence they are taken, viz. *Isa* 29. 13. where the words run thus: --and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men. Their fear towards me, i. e. their worship of me; as fear is taken, 2 *King*. 17. 32, 33. And then by [the commandments of



of men] is meant, those Traditions of the Elders before mentioned; what he calls [your traditions] and [your own traditions] before, here he calls [the commandments of men.] i. e. All such humane inventions and institutions in God's worship, which have no good ground, nor warrant from the Word of God, though they may pretend some. *Ex qua fundamentum habent in persuasione mere humana, & non divinitus tradita, saith Grotius.*

So that the sense of the whole clause is this,---Teaching for Doctrines the commandments of men] i. e. By their thus preaching up, and pressing the observation of their Traditions and humane Inventions in the worship of God, instead of those things which are of divine Institution and Appointment, they render their worship vain. 'Tis the property of Scripture alone to be profitable for Doctrine, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Hence Titus is required to show uncorruptness in doctrine, Tit. 2. 7. i. e. to deliver the pure truths of God not dashed with the water, nor alloy'd with the lead of humane inventions, whereby 'tis corrupted, as wine is with water, and gold with lead. So that, as the matter of all our Teaching is laid down Positively, in that Commission, *Matth. 28. ult. Teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you:* So here, teaching and urging any

any thing in the worship of God, not only contrary to, but besides, the Word, is condemned in these words by Christ; and they that take their measures in Worship, from the Commandments of men, their worship is vain, bootless, and unprofitable, yea mischievous and abominable: And such persons Christ pronounces to be Hypocrites; and such we must take 'em for, except we will contradict his judgement. Your zealous assertors of, and great sticklers for, the observation of humane inventions in God's worship, are great hypocrites in Christ's account; and they that urge and impose such things as strictly, or more strictly than the observation of divine Institutions, are guilty of gross hypocrisie, whatever they pretend, as to Decency, Uniformity, Authority, or the like. For, though a practice be really a matter of Decency and Convenience, and thereupon some Rules and Directions may be given by Authority about it; yet it ought not to be enjoyn'd as strictly, or as much stress laid upon it, as upon the substantials and vitals of Worship: as for example. In point of *Time*, or *Place*, or *Gesture*, or *Habit*, 'tis to be supposed, and I think we may well take it for granted, that generally, neither Ministers nor People are such bruits, and so void of understanding, as to perform Duties with such undue Circumstances,

cumstances, at such inconvenient Times, in such inconvenient Places, with such rude Postures, in such undecent Habits, as may render the service, or worship notoriously undecent, and wholly unprofitable, and inconsistent with the Glory of God, and the good of Souls: or, if any particulars should be guilty of such foul miscarriages, then let Governours take notice thereof, and censure offenders proportionably to the demerit of the crime; and not *perdere substantiam propter accidentia*, imbroid the whole Church by, and silence hundreds or thousands of inoffensive Ministers for non-compliance with, Impositions about such matters. Certainly the greatest evil that can be imagin'd to follow upon some irregular, undue, circumstantial miscarriage in worship, is not proportionable to the thousandth part of that mischief which we have always found has follow'd upon these Impositions.

*Sect. 19.* 3. The last method that Christ uses for the Vindication of his Disciples for their Non-conformity to this Imposition, is by way of Instruction, to inform the people, What it is that really and properly does pollute a man, *Matth. 15. 10--20. Mark 7. 14--23.* Where, as before he undermin'd the foundation of all their Traditions in general, so here he overthrows the ground-work

work of this Tradition in particular, by teaching and proving, that eating with unwashen hands defiles not a man, *Matth. 15. 20.* and if so, then there's no need to wash before meat. But this being besides my present design, I shall give it a discharge from any further attendance. And,

*Sect. 20.* For a close of all, I shall wind up the substance of all that has been said in a narrow compass. Here was (1) A *Law*, Precept, Injunction, Constitution, or call it what you will, it was something they look't upon as obligatory; and that (2) made by *lawful authority*, yea, the Supreme authority of the Nation: and this (3) about a *lawful matter*, viz. that which was not anywhere forbidden by the Law of God, nor contrary to any command; yea (4) it was a matter of civil *Decency*: and (5) that which they pretended some ground from Scripture for: And yet for all this (6) this Law or Command did not oblige: for then the neglect thereof would have been blame-worthy; which yet it was not, as appears by Christ's Vindication of his Disciples for it: though they did not obey this Command, nor observe this Custom, yet he does not in the least blame 'em for it. Nay,

(7) The Observation of it upon such an account, was not only not necessary, but unlawful;

unlawful ; as appears, in that Christ blames and taxes the Pharisees for this and such like observances ; and therefore (Lastly) *Nonconformity* herein was so far from being a sin, that it was their *Duty*, and *Conformity* or *Compliance* had been a sin ; from all which I infer, That

*A lawful practice, enjoyn'd by lawful Authority, is not thereby, and purely on that account, made necessary: but there is something else required, viz. That the matter of the law be necessary antecedently to the law, either in its own Nature, or in respect of some Circumstance (as has been shewed in the foregoing discourse about Indifferencies), or else it obliges not.*

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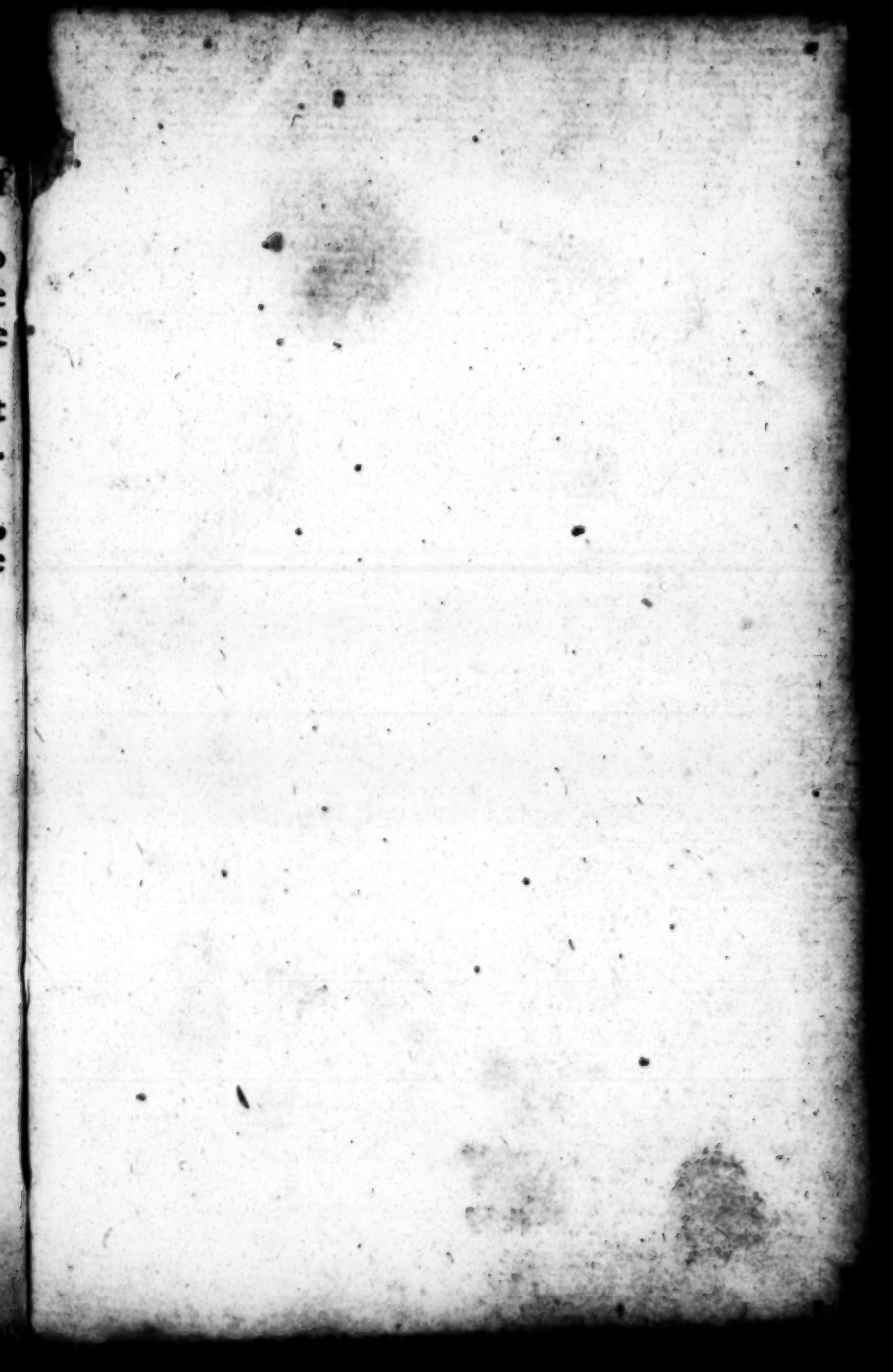
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